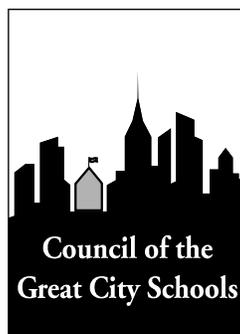


Raising the Achievement of English Language Learners in the Buffalo Public Schools

Report of the Strategic Support Team
of the
Council of the Great City Schools

Submitted to the
Buffalo Public Schools

By the Council of the Great City Schools



Winter 2009-10

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The Council of the Great City Schools thanks the many individuals who contributed to this project to improve achievement among English language learners in the Buffalo Public Schools. The efforts of these individuals were critical to our ability to present the district with the best possible proposals.

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Michael Casserly
Executive Director
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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

The Buffalo Public Schools have made important strides since the somber days in 2000 when the Council of the Great City Schools concluded that the school district was at a crossroads. At the time, we indicated, “The Buffalo school system is facing a critical choice. It can take the steps necessary to substantially improve student achievement, play a central role in the city’s economic revitalization, and increase public confidence in its schools. Or it can keep things pretty much as they are.” Over the years, it is clear that school system leaders decided to take the first and rockier path toward improvement.

The school board and then-superintendent Marion Canedo laid important groundwork for the necessary instructional reforms that were to follow. They set the district on the right course. They cleaned up substantial problems with the district’s finances. And they began to address a number of operational, financial, and organization issues that were getting in the way of progress. These were not small steps.

The current board and new superintendent James Williams have built on that operational foundation, but have put into place a more serious set of reforms on the instructional side of the ledger that are producing strong academic gains generally. The superintendent and his team have centered their instructional improvements on the all-critical element of literacy, adopting a districtwide reading program, pacing guides, instructional interventions, and required time blocks for reading, writing, and math. The superintendent has also carved out a special unit of the district’s lowest-performing schools, around which additional attention and resources can be devoted. The board has established a strong policy framework for the future. And the superintendent has brought in strong talent to both shape and sustain the reforms for the years ahead.

The effects have been significant. Student achievement in both reading and math has increased by substantially on state assessments. The district has narrowed the academic chasm with the state. And it is narrowing some of its own achievement gaps.

To its credit, the school board and the superintendent are also looking at the achievement of groups that are increasing in number but whose instruction historically has not been the centerpiece of the district’s reforms. The district has begun to ask important questions about whether its intent to educate all students has encompassed English-language learners, including immigrant and refugee children, who are coming to the city and to its public schools in ever larger numbers.

The school board and superintendent turned to the Council of the Great City Schools to look at how well the district’s instructional program was meeting the academic needs of these English-language learners and newcomers.

The Council looked at the broad educational program of the school district, but placed its main emphasis on how the district’s instructional systems worked on behalf of English language learners and on what the district had explicitly put into place for them. The team of experts assembled by the Council devoted most of its attention to assessing whether these students had full access to the district’s instructional opportunities.

In general, it was clear to the Council’s team why the district was making strong academic progress across the board. The district has a well-articulated literacy program built around the core principles articulated by the National Reading Panel. It has adopted commercial programs that generally produce strong results in other major cities across the country. The district has implemented in all of its schools a core instructional program that the central office works hard to support. There is a clearly articulated system of instructional interventions to catch students who are starting to fall behind. The district provides additional assistance and resources to many of its lowest performing schools. It has expanded its early childhood programs. Also, the district has improved its data and the use of that data. And the district has maximized its professional development as far as the contract will allow. These and other strategies are clearly responsible for boosting results for students.

The instructional programs put into place by the board, superintendent, and chief academic officer have also helped produce better results for English-language learners, particularly in reading at the early elementary grades. Results on the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT) that measures English proficiency show important progress as well. But the progress appears to stall at that point.

This report is how an otherwise well-articulated academic program that is showing strong overall gains can miss students who are learning English as a second language. In some ways the gaps are understandable in that the city is seeing significant numbers of students whose families are new to the country—students the district is just now turning its attention to. Many of these students come from countries that the community has no experience with and speak languages many people have never heard of. However, the school system didn’t seem to notice they were here, didn’t think to modify an otherwise successful program to ensure that these newcomers could succeed, and didn’t create an effective system to reach out to those communities.

In short, the instructional program for many of these new Americans is poorly defined, inconsistently implemented, and lacking a clear strategy for developing English acquisition skills. Most of all, the district appears to have very low expectations for these students, and this becomes clear from achievement levels in the late elementary grades and beyond. By the time many of these students reach high school, they are desperately behind and likely to drop out before graduation.

This report spells out where the programs succeed and where they fall short in meeting the instructional needs of these students. But more importantly the report spells out a series of strategies that we think will bring these students into the instructional mainstream and improve their achievement. The school district has demonstrated over the years an enormous capacity and will to improve. We are confident that it will apply that same determination with these new students.

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CHAPTER 2. ENROLLMENT AND ACHIEVEMENT

The Buffalo Public Schools serve the second most populous city in the state of New York. Like other post-industrial cities, Buffalo has seen a substantial decline in its manufacturing base since World War II and a corresponding drop in population and public school enrollment. Over the decades, Buffalo lost its railroad hub and saw its grain-milling and steel-making operations dwarfed by other cities. From being the eighth largest city in the country in 1900, the city’s population recently fell below that 1900 level.

A. ELL Enrollment and Trends

The Buffalo Public School district, likewise, has witnessed substantial changes in its enrollment. Today, the district serves about 34,000 students, of whom about 8 percent are English language learners. (Exhibit 1.)

Exhibit 1. Buffalo Public School Enrollment and English Language Learners by Year

	<i>2005-06</i>	<i>2006-07</i>	<i>2007-08</i>	<i>2008-09</i>
Total Enrollment	34,899	34,589	33,712	34,107
ELL Enrollment	2,700	2,878	2,827	3,112
ELL as % of Total	8%	8%	8%	9.1%

Source: New York State Report Card. Buffalo District Profile and BPS Office of Shared Accountability Data

For the past several years, English language learners (ELLs) accounted for about 8 percent of the district’s total enrollment; however, in 2008-09, ELL enrollment rose to 3,112 students, or about 9.1 percent of the district’s enrollment. The district’s proportion of ELLs is now slightly above the average district in New York State.

Spanish-speaking students (Hispanic/Latino) make up the largest portion of ELLs in Buffalo. In 2006 and 2007, they accounted for about 60 to 70 percent of all ELLs in the district, but by 2008 and 2009 the proportion had dropped to about 49 percent. At the same time, Asian-American students, who represented 6 to 8 percent of all district ELLs before 2008, had jumped to 21 percent of all ELLs by 2009. Black students who have arrived in recent years from other countries, moreover, are now about 20 percent of the ELL enrollment.

In addition to racial or ethnic diversity, the district is seeing significant changes in language diversity. In 2006 and 2007, almost 80 percent of the ELL enrollment in Buffalo was composed of students who spoke Spanish, Somali, or Arabic at home. By 2008, Karen, a language spoken in Myanmar or Burma, Thailand, and Tibet) became one of the district’s top four languages. By 2009, 80 percent of the district’s ELLs spoke one of five languages: Spanish,

Somali, Karen, Arabic, and Burmese. Speakers of Vietnamese were also numerous, but their share of the district’s ELL enrollment has declined somewhat in the last few years. (See Exhibit 2 for shifts in the most prevalent languages among ELLs in the Buffalo Public Schools.)

Exhibit 2. Shifts in the Five Most Prevalent Languages Spoken by ELLs in the Buffalo Public Schools by Year

Languages	2005-06		2006-07		2007-08			2008-09		
	Number	% All ELLs	Number	% All ELLs	Languages	Number	% All ELLs	Languages	Number	% All ELLs
Spanish	1,697	61.3%	1,735	60.3%	Spanish	1,605	54.8%	Spanish	1536	49.4%
Somali	319	11.5%	333	11.6%	Somali	340	11.6%	Somali	354	11.4%
Arabic	242	8.7%	259	9.0%	Arabic	247	8.4%	Karen	296	9.5%
Vietnamese	82	3.0%	80	2.8%	Karen	153	5.2%	Arabic	239	7.7%
Kpelle*	82	3.0%	60	2.1%	Vietnamese	83	2.8%	Burmese	143	4.6%
Total %		87.4%		85.7%			83.0%			82.5%
Total ELLs	2,770		2,878			2,927			3,112	

*Kpelle is spoken in Liberia and Guinea

Overall the data indicate that—

- Spanish, Somali, and Arabic have remained among the top five languages spoken in the homes of Buffalo ELLs between 2005-06 and 2008-09.
- Vietnamese was among the top five languages in 2005-06 through 2007-08, but had dropped out of the top five by 2009.
- By 2008-09, Burmese and Karen had moved into the top five languages spoken.

The fluctuations in the numbers and types of languages spoken by students in the Buffalo schools present enormous challenges in terms of materials, teacher recruitment, professional development, community and family engagement, cultural conflicts, and services.

B. ELL Special Populations

The Buffalo Public School district also has a relatively large number of ELLs who have been identified as needing special education services. The team reviewed data from 2005-06 through 2008-09 that showed that ELLs accounted for about 8 percent of all students with disabilities—or about the same share of special education students as the general enrollment.

But about 18.8 percent of all ELLs were in special education in 2007-08 and about 15.9 percent were identified for special education in 2008-09. The national and urban special education placement rate is about 13 percent.

In addition, a disproportionate number of the district’s English language learners who are identified for special education services were classified as learning disabled (LD), raising questions about the diagnostic and identification process. Exhibit 3 below shows that over 75 percent of Buffalo’s ELLs in special education were identified as LD and/or speech impaired (SI). By comparison, about 62 percent of students with disabilities nationally were identified as

LD and/or SI. (There are no national numbers on ELLs in special education.) The data suggest that most of the over-identification is in the area of learning disabilities rather than SI, which tends to be similar in Buffalo to national identification rates.

Exhibit 3. Percentage of ELLs Identified as Learning Disabled and Speech Impaired in Buffalo and Nationally

<i>Buffalo</i>	<i>2005-06</i>	<i>2006-07</i>	<i>2007-08</i>	<i>2008-09</i>
ELLs with LD	57.4%	54.5%	54.5%	55.2%
ELLs with SI	21.1%	21.1%	22.7%	21.4%
Cumulative	78.5%	75.6%	77.2%	76.6%
National	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
Students with LD	40.7%	39.9%	43.4%	--
Students with SI	21.8%	22.0%	19.3%	--
Cumulative	62.5%	61.9%	62.7%	--

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics

Over-identification issues in the LD category often result from the lack of explicit placement definitions and/or weak reading skills among students. Finally, the team looked at the total numbers of English language learners with disabilities by disability types. The data are shown in Exhibit 4 below.

Exhibit 4. English Language Learners with Disabilities by Disability Type

<i>Program Type</i>	<i>Disability Category</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Special Education	Autism	4	0%
Special Education	Emotional Disturbance	44	1%
Special Education	Hearing Impaired	2	0%
Special Education	Learning Disability	300	10%
Special Education	Mental Retardation	24	1%
Special Education	Multiple Disabilities	17	1%
Special Education	Orthopedic Impairment	3	0%
Special Education	Other Health Impairment	56	2%
Special Education	Preschool student w/disability	11	0%
Special Education	Speech or Language Impairment	126	4%
Special Education	Traumatic Brain Injury	1	0%
Special Education	Visual Impairment	2	0%
Special Education	ELL Special Education Total	590	20%
General Education	ELL Not Special Education	2,347	80%
Totals	Total English Language Learners	2,937	100%

* Totals may be slightly different from other tables due to differing databases used to collect information.

C. Student Achievement

The Buffalo Public Schools have made substantial and important gains in student achievement over the last several years as measured by the New York State Assessments. Between 2005-06 and 2008-09, the percentage of district third graders scoring at or above the state-defined proficiency level in reading increased from 37 percent to 49 percent or about 4.0 percentage points per year, compared with an average annual gain of 2.3 percentage points statewide over the same period. (Exhibit 5.)

Also during this time, the percentage of Buffalo third-graders scoring below basic levels of attainment dropped from 63 percent to 12 percent or an average yearly decline of 17 percentage points, compared with an average annual decline statewide of only 1.3 percentage points. Other grades assessed on the state test showed similar gains in reading at or above the proficiency level and similar declines in reading below the basic level.

In every grade assessed except one, the district showed sharper reading gains than the statewide grades. For example, the percentage of district fourth graders reading at or above proficient levels rose by an average 5.3 percentage points annually between spring 2006 and spring 2009, while statewide fourth graders gained an average 3.0 percentage points annually over the same period. At the eighth grade level, however, Buffalo students were gaining at a slightly less rapid rate than eighth graders statewide.

Exhibit 5. Percentage of Buffalo Students at or Above Proficiency Levels in Reading by Grade and Year

<i>Grade</i>		<i>2005-06</i>	<i>2006-07</i>	<i>2007-08</i>	<i>2008-09</i>	<i>Annual Δ</i>
3	Proficient +	37	36	47	49	4.0
	Below Basic	63	26	12	12	-17.0
4	Proficient +	38	40	42	54	5.3
	Below Basic	62	21	20	10	-17.3
5	Proficient +	35	39	53	56	7.0
	Below Basic	65	16	5	3	-20.7
6	Proficient +	31	35	44	64	11.0
	Below Basic	69	7	4	0	-23.0
7	Proficient +	27	27	45	62	11.7
	Below Basic	73	18	6	2	-23.7
8	Proficient +	21	34	28	43	7.3
	Below Basic	79	12	13	5	-24.7

Source: Council of the Great City Schools. *Beating the Odds: Analysis of Student Performance on State Assessments and NAEP*. Washington, DC 2010

The district has also shown substantial improvements in mathematics in the recent past. Between spring 2006 and spring 2009, the percentage of district third graders scoring at or above the proficient level in math on the state assessment rose from 40 percent to 75 percent, or an average annual gain increase of 11.7 percent, compared with the statewide average annual

increase of 3.7 percent. During the same period, the percentage of Buffalo students scoring below basic levels in math declined from 29 percent to 4 percent or an average yearly drop of 8.3 points, compared with a negligible decline statewide. Other grades in Buffalo also showed substantial improvement. (Exhibit 6.)

Exhibit 6. Percentage of Buffalo Students at or Above Proficiency Levels in Math by Grade and Year

Grade		2000-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	Annual Δ
3	Proficient +	40	43	67	75	11.7
	Below Basic	29	24	9	4	-8.3
4	Proficient +	47	45	54	64	5.7
	Below Basic	23	23	17	14	-3.0
5	Proficient +	27	38	51	62	11.7
	Below Basic	41	25	17	11	-10.0
6	Proficient +	27	38	49	57	10.0
	Below Basic	38	27	18	11	-9.0
7	Proficient +	22	29	50	63	13.7
	Below Basic	35	22	11	5	-10.0
8	Proficient +	17	26	34	58	13.7
	Below Basic	35	27	21	10	-8.3

Source: Council of the Great City Schools. *Beating the Odds: Analysis of Student Performance on State Assessments and NAEP*. Washington, DC 2010

The Council’s team also examined the scores of the district’s ELLs on the same state tests. (Exhibits 7 and 8.) The data on ELL achievement from spring 2006 through spring 2008, the most recent year available, suggest four conclusions: 1) ELL achievement on both reading and math tests is substantially below non-ELLs; 2) ELL achievement has shown some improvement; 3) the gaps between ELLs and non-ELLs grew in some instances and narrowed in others; and 4) improvement in ELL fourth grade reading scores came mostly at the lower ends of the scale.

Exhibit 7. Percentage of Buffalo ELLs and Non-ELLs at or Above Proficiency Levels in Reading by Grade and Year

Grade		2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	Annual Δ
4	ELL					
	Proficient +	11	17	21		5.0
	Below Basic	62	46	37		-12.5
Non-ELL	Proficient +	38	42	44		3.0
	Below Basic	26	20	19		-3.5
	8	ELL				
	Proficient +	3	6	3		0.0

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	Below Basic	42	38	44		1.0
	Non-ELL					
	Proficient +	22	35	30		4.0
	Below Basic	33	10	10		-11.5

Source: Council of the Great City Schools. *Beating the Odds: Analysis of Student Performance on State Assessments and NAEP*. Washington, DC 2010

Exhibit 8. Percentage of Buffalo ELLs and Non-ELLs at or Above Proficiency Levels in Math by Grade and Year

Grade		2000-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	Annual Δ
4	ELL					
	Proficient +	29	29	33		2.0
	Below Basic	34	35	29		-2.5
	Non-ELL					
	Non-ELL					
	Proficient +	49	46	56		3.5
	Below Basic	22	22	16		-3.0
	Non-ELL					
8	ELL					
	Proficient +	6	9	11		2.5
	Below Basic	44	48	47		1.5
	Non-ELL					
	Non-ELL					
	Proficient +	55	27	37		-9.0
	Below Basic	15	25	19		2.0

Source: Council of the Great City Schools. *Beating the Odds: Analysis of Student Performance on State Assessments and NAEP*. Washington, DC 2010

The average reading proficiency rate among ELLs in the fourth grade, for instance, was 21 percent in spring 2008, compared with 44 percent among non-ELLs. In math, the average rate at or above proficiency among ELLs at the fourth grade level was 33 percent in spring 2008, compared with 56 percent among non-ELLs.

Nevertheless, ELLs have shown gains. The percentage of the district's fourth-grade ELLs reading at or above the proficient level rose from 11 percent in spring 2006 to 21 percent in spring 2008; and the percentage below basic reading levels dropped from 62 percent to 37 percent over the same period. At the eighth grade level, however, ELLs showed low performance and no improvement. Only 3 percent of eighth-grade ELLs were reading at or above the proficient level in 2007-08, the same level seen in 2005-06. In math, there were modest gains among ELLs. In spring 2008, some 33 percent of fourth graders were scoring at or above the proficient level, up from 29 percent in spring 2006. Over the same time period, eighth graders improved their math proficiency rate from 6 percent to 11 percent.

Overall, districtwide achievement gaps between ELLs and non-ELLs widened in some grades and narrowed in others. For instance, the data indicate that the reading gap between ELLs and non-ELLs in fourth grade narrowed four percentage points between spring 2006 and spring 2008 but widened by eight points in the eighth grade. In math, the gap between the two groups

widened by three points in the fourth grade and narrowed by 23 points in the eighth, largely due to a substantial decline in scores among non-ELLs. (Exhibit 9.)

The Council also looked at performance and trends between spring 2006 and spring 2008 among ELLs in Buffalo compared to ELLs statewide. (Buffalo has about 1 percent of the state’s ELLs.) First, the data are clear that the achievement of ELLs in Buffalo is well below achievement of ELLs statewide in both reading and math, except in grade 8.

Exhibit 9. Gaps in Buffalo between ELLs and Non-ELLs at or above Proficiency in Reading and Math, 2005-06 to 2007-08

Grade		2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	Change
	Reading				
4	ELLs	11	17	21	+10
	Non-ELLs	38	42	44	+6
	Gap	27	25	23	-4
8	ELLs	3	6	3	0
	Non-ELLs	22	35	30	+8
	Gap	19	29	27	+8
	Math				
4	ELLs	29	29	33	+4
	Non-ELLs	49	46	56	+7
	Gap	20	17	23	+3
8	ELLs	6	9	11	+5
	Non-ELLs	55	27	37	-18
	Gap	49	18	26	-23

Source: Council of the Great City Schools. *Beating the Odds: Analysis of Student Performance on State Assessments and NAEP*. Washington, DC 2010

Second, the data indicate that Buffalo’s ELLs improved in reading more rapidly than ELLs statewide at the fourth grade level, but neither the district nor the state showed much improvement in reading among eighth-grade ELLs. In math, Buffalo’s ELLs at the fourth and eighth grade levels showed gains, as indicated previously, but ELLs statewide showed substantially greater improvement in both grades. The results meant that the math proficiency gap between ELLs in Buffalo and ELLs statewide widened substantially. (Exhibit 10.)

Exhibit 10. Gaps between ELLs in Buffalo and Statewide at or above Proficiency in Reading and Math, Spring 2006 to Spring 2008

Grade		2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	Change
	Reading				
4	ELLs--Buffalo	11	17	21	+10
	ELLs--NYS	27	24	31	+4
	Gap	16	7	10	-6
8	ELLs--Buffalo	3	6	3	0
	ELLs--NYS	5	6	6	+1
	Gap	2	0	3	+1

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Math					
4	ELLs--Buffalo	29	29	33	+4
	ELLs--NYS	50	55	64	+14
	Gap	21	26	31	+10
8	ELLs--Buffalo	6	9	11	+5
	ELLs--NYS	23	28	41	+18
	Gap	17	19	30	+13

Source: Council of the Great City Schools. *Beating the Odds: Analysis of Student Performance on State Assessments and NAEP*. Washington, DC 2010

Finally, the Council team looked at trends below basic levels of attainment in reading and math on the state tests. Exhibits 5 and 6 indicate that the district saw a substantial decline in the percentages of ELLs scoring below basic levels in reading at the fourth grade level but little improvement in the eighth grade. Non-ELLs showed much greater reading improvements at the lowest levels in the eighth grade than at the fourth. Moreover, there was a modest decline in the percentages of Buffalo ELLs scoring below basic levels in math in fourth grade but no change in eighth grade.

D. English Proficiency

The Council's team also analyzed the scores of Buffalo's ELLs on the state English proficiency test—NYSESLAT. The test is given to all ELLs, refugees, and immigrants regardless of time in country. (Exhibit 11.)

Exhibit 11. ELL Performance on NYSESLAT by Proficiency Levels in All Grades

		Reading and Writing			
School Year	# Tested	Beginning	Intermediate	Advanced	Proficient
2007-08	2,660	32%	33%	26%	9%
2008-09	2,835	35%	31%	24%	11%
Change	175	3	-2	-2	2
		Listening and Speaking			
School Year	# Tested	Beginning	Intermediate	Advanced	Proficient
2007-08	2,648	9%	19%	40%	31%
2008-09	2,836	10%	21%	36%	32%
Change	188	1	2	-4	1

Source: Buffalo Public Schools, Office of Shared Accountability.

The data show that the number of ELLs taking the NYSESLAT increased about 7 percent between spring 2008 and spring 2009. In both school years and across all grades, about 60 percent of all ELLs scored at the beginning and intermediate levels on the reading and writing portions of the NYSESLAT; about 30 percent scored at these levels on the listening and speaking portions of the test. There was also no significant change over the one-year period in the proportion of ELLs scoring at the advanced or proficient levels in reading and writing, but

there was a slight drop in the numbers scoring at these two higher levels in the listening and speaking areas of the test.

Second, the team examined the scores of a cohort of Buffalo’s ELLs on NYSESLAT over a two-, three-, and four-year period. The analysis looked at the movement across the proficiency levels of students who remained in a district ELL program (either bilingual or ESL) for a number of years. The analysis looked at the movement of cohorts by major program type, major language groups (Spanish and Somali), racial groups, gender, and special education and general education groupings. (See Appendix C.) The methodology involved the following

First, we examined the number and percentages of ELLs achieving at each English-proficiency performance level in spring 2006 and spring 2009, and we calculated the change in the numbers and percentages of the same students scoring at each level over time. (Exhibit 12.) For example, about 23.7 percent of 768 ELLs scored at the advanced level on the NYSESLAT in spring 2006, 38.2 percent scored at the intermediate level, and 34.5 at the beginning level. By spring 2009, of those same students, 117 scored at the proficient level, where none had scored before; 91 more scored at the advanced level; 32 fewer scored at the intermediate level; and 176 fewer were at the beginning level than three years earlier. Some 15.2 percent of Buffalo’s ELLs scored, and the number scoring at the beginning level dropped by 22.9 percentage points.

Exhibit 12. English Proficiency on the NYSESLAT for a Four-Year Longitudinal Cohort of Buffalo ELLs, Tested in Spring 2006 and Spring 2009

New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT)						
Performance	2005 - 2006		2008 - 2009		Change	
	Student		Student			
Level	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Proficient	0	0	117	15.2	117	15.2
Advanced	210	27.3	301	39.2	91	11.8
Intermediate	293	38.2	261	34.0	(32)	(4.2)
Beginning	265	34.5	89	11.6	(176)	(22.9)
Total Students	768	100.0	768	100.0		

Source: Buffalo Public Schools, Office of Shared Accountability.

Second, the Council created a rudimentary measure of “value added” by examining how individual ELL performance in this cohort changed on the NYSESLAT between spring 2006 and spring 2009. (Exhibit 13.)

For example, of the ELL students in the four-year cohort who attained the advanced level on the NYSESLAT in spring 2006, 13.5 percent were still performing at this level in spring 2009. About 8.9 percent had risen to the proficient level while 4.6 percent had dropped to the intermediate level, and another 0.4 percent had dropped two levels to the beginning level. Similarly, among students at the beginning level in spring 2006, 9.6 percent remained at that level spring 2009, and the remainder had moved up one or more levels.

Exhibit 13. NYSESLAT Value-Add for the Four-Year Longitudinal Cohort of Buffalo ELLs, 2006-06 to 2008-08, Tested in Spring 2006 and Spring 2009

<i>from \ to</i>	Proficient	Advanced	Intermediate	Beginning
Advanced	8.9	13.5	4.6	0.4
Intermediate	5.6	16.7	14.3	1.6
Beginning	0.8	9.0	15.1	9.6

Source: Buffalo Public Schools, Office of Shared Accountability.

Third, the team created a way to summarize the changes. The team looked at the gross percentages of ELLs who had declined by one or more performance levels, stayed at the same performance level, or improved one or more performance levels over the study period. The results are summarized in Exhibit 13.

Districtwide, between spring 2006 and spring 2009, 56.0 percent of the ELL cohort improved in English proficiency. Most of this improvement was by one performance level (40.6 percent), but 14.6 percent improved two levels, and 0.8 percent improved three levels. On the other hand, some 6.5 percent declined in their English proficiency. About 6.1 percent dropped one level, 0.4 percent dropped two, and no one dropped three. About 37.5 percent attained the same English proficiency in spring 2009 that they had in spring 2006. (Exhibit 14)

Exhibit 14. Percentage of Buffalo ELLs in the Four-Year Longitudinal Cohort (2005-06 to 2008-09) who Remained at the Same Performance Level on the NYSESLAT or Improved or Declined by One to Three Levels, Tested in Spring 2006 and Spring 2009

<i>Summary</i>	<i>Value Add</i>	<i>% No Change</i>	<i>% One Level</i>	<i>% Two Levels</i>	<i>% Three Levels</i>
% Regressed	6.5	--	6.1	0.4	0
% No Change	37.5	37.5	--	--	--
% Progressed	56.0	--	40.6	14.6	0.8
Total	100.0%				

Source: Buffalo Public Schools, Office of Shared Accountability.

Finally, the team created a net weighted impact metric to compare gains and losses among cohort students. To derive the metric, the team applied a positive or negative multiplier to the percentage of students from Exhibit 11 who gained or regressed performance levels over the three years. The weight for regressing one level was (-1), for regressing two levels (-2), and so on. Gains in performance levels earned positive weights. The weighted scores were then totaled to derive a “net weighted impact metric.”

Exhibit 15 shows that the districtwide “net weighted impact” in English proficiency for the cohort of ELLs who had been in the district and tested on the NYSESLAT each of the four years between 2005-06 and 2008-09. The index of +65.2 means that there was a positive gain in English proficiency among this cohort of students.

Exhibit 15. Net Weighted Impact of Buffalo Schools on English Proficiency

<i>net weighted impact metric</i>	
positive	+65.2

In addition, the analysis yielded the following findings about the district’s ELL subgroup and the relative value of the district’s programs:

- The longer that district ELLs stay in either a bilingual education or on ESL program the more likely they are to improve their English proficiency. ELLs who stayed in a program for four years did better than those who stayed in for three, and those who stayed in for three years did better than those who were in the program for only two
- Both bilingual education and ESL programs appear to have a positive effect on English proficiency after four years, although ESL programs showed a slightly stronger effect that may be due to factors unrelated to the programs themselves.
- The programs showed positive effects on English proficiency for both Hispanic students and black students of families arriving relatively recently from Africa.
- The programs showed positive effects on English proficiency among both Spanish-speaking and Somali-speaking students
- About 47 percent of ELLs in special education scored at the lowest level (Level 1) of English proficiency on the NYSESLAT while 28 percent of ELLs not in special education scored at Level 1.
- The programs showed positive effects on English proficiency among all ELLs, whether in special education programs and not, but ELLs in special education were less likely to progress than those not in special education, and they were more likely to show no progress at all. (Forth-nine percent of ELLs in special education showed *no change* in their English proficiency levels across four years, compared with 33 percent of ELLs not in special education; 43 percent of ELLs in special education *made progress* in their English proficiency, compared with 62 percent of ELLs not in special education. In both cases, the remaining students regressed – 8 percent in special education and 4 percent not in special education.)
- The programs showed positive effects on English proficiency for both males and female ELLs.

E. Schools and Programs for English Language Learners

The team was provided with data that indicated that about 33 district schools offered ELL programming of some sort and about 40 schools had ELLs in any significant number. Some schools had multiple programs for ELLs and some schools had ELLs in schools with no formal ESL or bilingual education program. In the 2007-08 school year, there were 67 programs offered districtwide. In the 2008-09 school year, that number dropped to 50. The district’s data showed:

- In 2007-08, 31 programs or schools had between 1 and 20 ELLs enrolled, account for about 4 percent of the district's ELLs. Twelve schools had between 21 and 100 ELLs enrolled, or 21 percent of the ELLs. In other words, 43 programs or schools served a quarter of Buffalo's ELLs.
- In 2007-08, 73 percent of ELLs were served by eight schools, six of them enrolling between 101 and 300 ELLs and two enrolling more than 300 ELLs.
- The ELL enrollment changed somewhat in 2008-09 with 29 sites (programs/schools) enrolling between 1 and 20 ELLs (still 4 percent) and a total of 39 sites enrolling 23 percent of all ELLs.
- Eleven schools, each with 101 or more ELL students, now serve 83 percent of all ELLs.
- There was a slight increase in both the number and the percentage of ELLs enrolled in schools with 101 to 300 ELLs, but the number of schools with fewer than 20 ELLs remained at around 40.

The data also suggest that the district has a fair number of schools and programs that enroll small numbers of ELLs.

In addition, the data provided to the team indicated that about three-quarters of ELLs in the Buffalo Public Schools attended a school that was in some form of "school improvement" status under Title I of *No Child Left Behind (NCLB)*. The team reviewed New York State school report cards and each school's AYP status, and compared the lists (from two differing sources) against schools with ELL programs. (See Appendix B.) The data indicated the following:

- According to Buffalo's Department of Multilingual Education, there were 34 schools with ELLs. The district's Office of Shared Accountability indicates that there are 50 programs or schools that have ELLs. This latter number includes multiple programs that are housed in the same school and small numbers of ELLs who attend schools where there were no ELL programs.
- Of the 50 program/schools with ELL students, 27 were on the state's list of Title I schools that are in "school improvement" status under NCLB. In 2007-2009, these 27 schools enrolled 74 percent of all ELLs in the district.
- Of the 34 schools on the district's Department of Multilingual Education list, 21 were in some form of school improvement.

CHAPTER 3. PURPOSE AND ORIGIN OF THE PROJECT

OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT

The Council of the Great City Schools, the nation's primary coalition of large urban school systems, presents this report and its recommendations for improving achievement among English language learners in the Buffalo Public Schools.

To conduct its work, the Council assembled a Strategic Support Team of curriculum, instruction, and bilingual education leaders and specialists from other major urban school districts across the country. All of these individuals have faced many of the same issues that Buffalo faces. Council staff members accompanied and supported the team during its review and prepared this report summarizing the team's findings and proposals.

The team made its first site visit to Buffalo on April 28-May 1, 2009. During that visit, the team went to 11 schools and about 100 classrooms, including general education, self-contained English-as-a-second-language classes, self-contained special education/bilingual education classes, and newcomer classes.¹ The visit also included extensive interviews with central office administrators, school-based staff, teachers, parents, and others. The final day was devoted to synthesizing the team's findings and proposed improvement strategies. The team debriefed the superintendent at the end of the site visit.

PROJECT GOALS

Superintendent James Williams and the Buffalo board of education asked the Council of the Great City Schools to review Buffalo's programs for English language learners and focus specifically on the following areas: Department leadership, management, and organization; program design and implementation; effectiveness of instruction and professional development; and quality of data and assessment systems

THE WORK OF THE STRATEGIC SUPPORT TEAM

The Strategic Support Team visited the Buffalo Public Schools in 2009 and looked for evidence that teachers were exhibiting high expectations and appropriate instructional strategies for teaching academic content to English language learners. The team looked for evidence of differentiated instruction of curricular objectives, assignment of appropriate work, student engagement, English language development strategies, and academic language and vocabulary development. The team spoke with principals about how they used data and monitored classroom instruction. And, the team looked at the level and rigor of instruction taking place when English language learners were present in a general education classroom setting.

¹ Schools visited included McKinley High School, D'Youville-Porter School #3, Antonia Pantoja School #18, International School #45 @ 4, International School #45 @ 40, Bilingual Center School #33, Herman Badillo School #76 @ 77, Frank A. Sedita Academy #30, Lafayette High School, Olmstead School #64, and Waterfront School #95.

The team was able to visit only a subset of schools and see only a limited number of classrooms. Each classroom visit was short and may not have reflected a typical day for students or teachers. Still, in visiting some 100 classrooms in 11 schools, the team felt that it was seeing a representative sample of instruction being carried out for English language learners.

In addition to the school and classroom visits, the team conducted extensive interviews with central office staff members, school board members, principals, teachers, and representatives of outside organizations, parents, and others.² The team, moreover, reviewed numerous documents and reports and analyzed data on student performance.

Finally, the team examined the district’s broad instructional strategies, materials, core reading and math programs, assessment programs, and professional development efforts. It also reviewed district priorities and analyzed how the strategies and programs in Buffalo's Three-Year Academic Achievement Plan supported efforts to raise achievement among English language learners.

Over the last 10 years, the Council has conducted over 180 instructional, management, organizational and operational reviews of its members. The approach of using peers to provide technical assistance and advice to urban school districts is unique to the Council and its members and is proving to be effective for a number of reasons.

First, the approach allows the superintendent to work directly with talented, successful practitioners from other urban districts that have a record of accomplishment.

Second, the recommendations developed by these peer teams have validity because the individuals who developed them have faced many of the same problems now encountered by the school system requesting the review. These individuals are aware of the challenges that urban schools face, and their strategies have been tested under the most rigorous conditions.

Third, using senior urban school managers from other communities is faster and less expensive than retaining an outside management consulting firm. It does not take team members long to determine what is going on in a district.

Finally, the teams furnish a pool of expertise that a school system superintendent, school board, and staff can use to implement the recommendations or to develop other strategies.

Members of the Council’s Strategic Support Teams participating in this project included the following individuals—

STRATEGIC SUPPORT TEAM

Christine Garbe* English Language Learner Supervisor Anchorage School District Anchorage, Alaska	Jennifer Alexander Manager, Multilingual Department Houston Independent School District Houston, Texas
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² The Council’s peer reviews are based on interviews of staff and others, a review of documents provided by the district, observations of operations, and our professional judgment. The team conducting the interviews relies on the willingness of those interviewed to be truthful and forthcoming. It makes every effort to provide an objective assessment of district functions but cannot always judge the accuracy of statements made by all interviewees.

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<p>Joanne Urrutia* Administrative Director, Division of Bilingual Education and World Languages Miami-Dade County Public Schools Miami, Florida</p>	<p>Michael Casserly* Executive Director Council of the Great City Schools Washington, DC</p>
<p>Adriane Williams,* Ph.D. Assistant Professor of Education Leadership Studies West Virginia University. Former Research Manager of the Council of the Great City Schools</p>	<p>Gabriela Uro* Manager for English Language Learner Policy and Research Council of the Great City Schools Washington, DC</p>

* Individuals who made site visits to schools.

CONTENTS OF THIS REPORT

This report begins with an Executive Summary summarizing the project and the initiatives of the Buffalo Public Schools. Chapter 1 presents an overview of the Buffalo Public Schools and English language learner (ELL) performance in the district. Chapter 2 presents the findings and recommendations of the Council’s Strategic Support Team. Chapter 3 summarizes the report and discusses next steps.

The appendices of this report contain additional information. Appendix A presents a brief history of linguistic diversity in the city of Buffalo. Appendix B lists the AYP status of Buffalo schools having sizable numbers of English language learners. Appendix C shows Seattle’s tiered coaching support system that is referred to in the report. Appendix D the lists the people the team interviewed either individually or in groups. Appendix E lists the documents that the team examined. Appendix F presents brief biographical sketches of team members. And Appendix G gives a brief description of the Council of the Great City Schools and the some 180 Strategic Support Team reviews that the organization has conducted over the last decade.

The reader should note that this project did not examine the entire school system or every aspect of the district’s instructional program. instead, we devoted our efforts to looking strictly at initiatives affecting the academic attainment of English language learners, including general education curriculum and professional development. we did not try to inventory those efforts or examine non-instructional issues that might affect the academic attainment of English language learners. rather, we looked at strategies, programs, and other activities that would help explain why the city’s English language learners were learning at the level they were, and what might be done to improve it.

CHAPTER 4. FINDINGS

This chapter summarizes the findings of the Council of the Great City Schools' Strategic Support Team on the efforts of the Buffalo Public Schools to improve the academic achievement of the district's English language learners (ELLs). This chapter presents observations in 10 categories: (1) leadership and strategic direction, (2) goals and accountability, (3) curriculum and instruction, (4) program design and delivery, (5) program monitoring, (6) program and student placement, (7) data and assessments, (8) human capital and professional development, (9) parents and community, and (10) funding and compliance.

A. Leadership and Strategic Direction

This section presents the team's findings, both positive and negative, related to leadership and the strategic direction of Buffalo's initiatives to improve the instructional program for its English language learners.

Positive Findings

- Buffalo has shown substantial improvement since the Council's first review in 2000. Notable areas of improvement include its leadership, its staff capacity, and its overall academic performance. With the arrival of James Williams as superintendent in 2005, the district has focused on and substantially improved the instructional program of the district with funds from the New York State financial adequacy settlement.
- The superintendent and the school board share concerns about the academic attainment of the district's English language learners. The superintendent has acted to strengthen the ELL program by requesting a formal review of the district's programs by the Council of the Great City Schools.
- The district has both a policy and goals supporting equitable access to the curriculum and differentiated instruction for all district students. In 2006, the school board adopted a clear, straightforward, and comprehensive policy regarding instruction for ELLs. The policy describes ELLs as an integral part of the district's efforts to provide *all* students with equitable access to the general curriculum and ensure that instruction is differentiated appropriately to meet the academic needs of *all* students. The policy includes elements that have particular import for ELLs, including—
 - ✚ Language that explicitly references equal access for ELLs and their inclusion in districtwide equity goals
 - ✚ Provisions recognizing that achieving this ELL-equity goal requires staff collaboration and shared responsibility at all levels—central office, building principals, teachers, and instructional support personnel
 - ✚ Language that explicitly states the expected academic attainment of ELLs in the areas of general content achievement, English language proficiency, and postsecondary entrance.

In general, the school board policy lays an important foundation for implementing effective instructional programs for ELLs: 1) Proper identification and placement of ELLs, 2) access to appropriate instructional programs that are based on sound pedagogy and aligned to state standards, 3) monitoring of ELL academic progress with appropriate assessments, and 4) communications with parents and the community—in multiple languages—to enhance understanding and support of ELL programming.

- The superintendent has a strong instructional team and has strengthened staff capacity in the central office in order to support a better ELL program. Interviews and documents reviewed by the team confirm that the superintendent led a concerted effort to build district capacity to address the needs of ELLs.

In the fall of 2006, the superintendent hired a new director of multilingual education, of whom the Council team thought very highly. The director appears to be a strong leader with good support from staff members, schools, and the community and with good skills and a sense of commitment to improving instruction for ELLs. The district continues to fill a series of positions such as supervisors, support teachers, resource teachers, newcomer-support teachers, and social workers to help serve ELLs. When the Council visited, the district appeared to have a fully staffed central office to guide and support a strong instructional program for ELLs. The team was told that the multilingual education director was a strong part of the superintendent's instructional team.

Areas of Concern

- The team heard very little sense of urgency among staff outside the Department of Multilingual Education about improving the achievement of English language learners in the Buffalo schools; nor did the team hear much frustration generally about the low performance level of these students. The team also saw staff districtwide holding very low expectations for the achievement of ELLs. The team, however, did hear that staff members were pleased that the Council was looking at the district's ELL status.
- The district lacks a clear vision and broad overarching programmatic strategy for improving the instruction of ELLs. Instead, the instruction of ELLs was seen more in remedial terms than anything else. Likewise, it seemed to the team that each school was largely on its own to implement programs and strategies of their choosing without much guidance or direction.

Staff members, teachers, and school-based interviewees outside the Department of Multilingual Education often gave varying descriptions of the district's ELL approach. Some individuals interviewed across the district described the district's bilingual education strategy as involving translation. Others indicated that the bilingual program was a transition program in which initial instruction was provided in the native language, with English eventually introduced and incorporated. Several individuals indicated that the district's strategy was shifting to greater use of English. Few people outside the Department of Multilingual Education were able to articulate where the district was going in its efforts for ELLs. Without a clearly articulated sense of direction that everyone understands, recent increases in funding for the Department of Multilingual Education,

adoption of a supportive school board policy, and hiring of key staff members to lead ELL efforts could all be thwarted.

- The district does not have a clear idea of what good ELL instruction should look like. District staff members the team interviewed were often unable to articulate what type of instructional program would increase ELL achievement. In general, the district does not always recognize that ELLs have unique instructional needs. Staff could articulate the direction and components of the district’s literacy program, but they were unable to link it to the needs of English language learners or to indicate how the district’s basic reading program was being used to address ELL needs.
- The school board receives achievement data on math and English language arts on a periodic basis but little information on the status or progress of ELLs in gaining English proficiency (as measured on the NYSESLAT) or content skills.
- The district must comply with State Regulation 154 on services to English language learners, but the team heard that the school board did not always have ready access to the report that was filed with the state in order to be in compliance with this regulation.³
- It seemed to the team that English language learners were not always well received in all schools. The level of acceptance appeared to vary from school to school, as some school leaders clearly valued the presence of ELLs and others voiced concern that ELLs would dampen their state test scores.
- The district’s Department of Multilingual Education was seen by the team as working in isolation from the remainder of the school system. Moreover, the position of director for multilingual education had been vacant for some years until, after some external community pressure, Superintendent Williams filled it. In some ways, it was not surprising that the multilingual department was not well integrated into the broader efforts of the district after the leadership position had been left open for so long.
- Many district staff outside the Department of Multilingual Education showed little ready knowledge of ELL issues or of districtwide efforts to address ELL needs. The team noted that staff members generally were often unable to cite data or estimates about ELL participation in various programs. For instance, a number of staff indicated that newcomers from war-torn African countries were a challenge, but only a handful could state the nature or magnitude of the issues or the programs the district was putting together to address them. Also, interviewees cited high mobility rates among students who had families in Puerto Rico, but no one could cite an actual mobility rate among these students or describe how the district was assisting these students as they moved back and forth.

³ Part 154 of the Regulation of the New York Commissioner of Education governs services for Limited English Proficient (LEP) students or ELLs. School districts that receive Total Foundation Aid must develop a two year Comprehensive Plan (CP 154.3(a)) to meet the educational needs of ELLs and submit an annual data and information report on ELLs. The district provided its report to the Council as part of this review.

- In general, it appears that, historically, English language learners have been largely invisible in the system.

B. Goals and Accountability

This section presents the team’s findings on how the district has translated its overall vision for English language learners into attainable and measurable goals. The section also looks at how the school district holds its people accountable for attaining those goals.

Positive Findings

- The district’s three-year Academic Achievement Plan issued in 2005-06 and its 2008 addendum lay out clear academic goals for the district, with a strong focus on developing early literacy. The plan provides a clear direction around four goals: (1) improved academic achievement, (2) professional growth to support teacher effectiveness, (3) effective and efficient support for teachers and ongoing monitoring of student progress, and (4) equal access to the general curriculum and differentiated instruction. The plan involved intensive reading and literacy efforts and included an Early Success Plan (pre-kindergarten to grade three) that revolved around “building students’ background knowledge, oral language skills, and early literacy and numeracy skills.”

The 2008 addendum to the Academic Achievement Plan updated the initial literacy and mathematics initiative by expanding the pathway for student achievement in social studies, science, physical education, art and music. The overview of the addendum states, “teachers will differentiate instruction to make accommodations for English language learners...” The needs of ELLs are addressed under the universal access component of the document, which includes general information about instruction, support, accountability, and universal access to all content areas.

- Issues of accountability for results are a regular feature of the district leadership’s discourse about district improvement. The administration, moreover, has taken steps to improve the ability of district administrators to focus on the bottom line, student achievement. For example, the lead community superintendent was selected under the reorganization plan to focus on district operations as a way of freeing other community superintendents to focus on instruction, data use, and principal evaluations.
- The director of the Department of Multilingual Education reports directly to the district’s chief academic officer.
- The team saw instances where staff members voiced high levels of shared accountability, high expectations, and concern for ELL achievement. For instance, the team heard such positive comments about International School (45), but the team understands that the school is now back on the SURR list, underscoring that perceptions are sometimes at odds with the achievement data.
- The district had measurable districtwide goals for academic improvement (including for ELLs) that were consistent with requirements under *No Child Left Behind (NCLB)*.

Areas of Concern

- The district had districtwide goals related to the academic attainment or improvement among ELLs, but few people at the school level knew what they were, and most of the school improvement plans the team reviewed made no reference to them. The district's Academic Achievement Plan, moreover, has no explicit achievement goals for ELLs.
- Staff members were quick to deflect responsibility for issues related to English language learners by referring all such matters to the Department of Multilingual Education. There appeared to be little ownership of or shared responsibility for the academic attainment of ELLs across the district. Responsibility for ELLs was generally viewed as the sole province of the multilingual unit.
- The relatively small numbers of ELLs in the district appeared to render them invisible in the eyes of some. The team's review of state AYP school reports showed that several schools did not report out achievement data on the ELL subgroup due to their small numbers. In fact, the district serves about 25 percent of its ELLs in schools that enroll fewer than 20 such students. This low number of ELLs results in their exclusion from AYP calculations. The minimum N-size under New York State rules is 30 students before test results are counted against the school's accountability status. For example, New York State school accountability reports for Schools #64 (Olmstead), Southside Elementary, and International Preparatory Schools at Grover Cleveland showed no results for ELLs because of "Insufficient Number of Students to Determine AYP Status." This phenomenon undercuts the district's ability to monitor schools for ELL achievement or to hold its staff accountable for their results.
- While there is considerable discussion about accountability among senior instructional leaders in the school district, there is no mechanism by which staff is actually held responsible. In other words, the culture of responsibility is clearly being strengthened across the district, but there are few real procedures in place that hold central office staff members accountable for the academic improvement or failure of English language learners.
- The evaluation of community superintendents did not include student achievement targets. Community superintendents, in general—including those with responsibility for the superintendent's special district where many ELLs attended school—exhibited very limited knowledge of ELLs or their performance, indicating that individual principals handled that level of detail. Many did not know how many ELLs were in their schools, nor could they describe programs for them, and no one could indicate where the academic skills of ELLs showed the greatest strengths or weaknesses. (For example, the community superintendents assumed that the greatest area of weakness was in grammar.) Finally, there appeared to be little coordination between community superintendents and content area specialists with interests in ELL issues.
- Accountability for principals and school-based administrators is not linked explicitly to ELL achievement or to student achievement data in general. The team was told that the principals' union was strongly opposed to linking administrator evaluations to student

achievement. The team reviewed forms used for evaluating principals and assistant principals (the annual professional performance review) and confirmed that the personnel evaluation process does not include explicit provisions related to the academic attainment or improvement of ELLs or any group. The section on school/community/business relations, however, does include a reference to ELLs. Otherwise, individuals are rated on their ability to “exhibit strategies that promote the understanding, sensitivity and respect of multi-cultural and ethnic diversity”—although there is no reference to linguistic diversity *per se*. Instead, district leadership instituted staff meetings and walk-through procedures to enhance accountability, but the team saw little evidence that these practices were creating the culture of responsibility that the district was striving for yet.

- The evaluation of teachers is generic and does not include indicators of ELL academic improvement or differentiated instruction. The teacher evaluation forms were very general and provided little way to assess whether or to what extent a teacher had improved the academic achievement of ELLs or anyone else. There is actually nothing on the evaluation form that references ELLs. The teachers union is opposed to tying teacher evaluations to student achievement.
- Although the community superintendents signed off on the school improvement plans, the plans that the team reviewed did not, in general, include specific intervention strategies for addressing low achievement among ELLs. There was no process that indicated that community superintendents should reject plans that did not include such strategies. And there were no consequences at the community superintendent, principal, or teacher levels if ELL achievement did not improve on the goals set in the plans or anywhere else.
- In general, the concept of accountability for student achievement is not widely supported or consistently embraced across the district. There is a generalized sense of responsibility for student achievement at senior leadership levels, but the overall concept of personal responsibility for academic performance is weak to nonexistent in many quarters.

C. Curriculum and Instruction

This section contains the team’s findings on the instructional program that the Buffalo Public School district uses to teach its English language learners. The team looked at multiple aspects of the district’s curriculum (both general education and bilingual education). It sought to determine how differentiated the curriculum was and how it took into account various language acquisition needs of ELLs.

The team also looked at how well the English language development materials and textbooks assisted students in moving through the varying levels of English-language mastery, while also ensuring that students were attaining necessary content or subject-matter knowledge. By and large, however, the team did not review the general education program of the district.

Positive Findings

- As indicated, the district developed a three-year Academic Achievement Plan (AAP) in 2005 that focused on raising student achievement, with a particularly strong focus on literacy. The reading component of the initiative emphasized the five main components of reading instruction articulated by the National Reading Panel: phonemic awareness, decoding/phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. The plan states clearly that "the Reading Initiative will allow teachers to differentiate instruction and to make accommodations for English Language Learners and students with disabilities."
- The 2008 addendum to the plan included a "Literacy Across the Curriculum Framework" that built on the original initiative and indicates that the district envisions ramping up its efforts to move beyond foundations of early literacy and to "develop literacy through reading, writing, critical thinking, or meta-cognition, and culturally and linguistically responsive teaching." The document focuses on intermediate and secondary literacy development and provides the research for the approach. Generally, the document also discusses how teachers are to elicit the appropriate level of rigor and expectations for student work and engagement. Finally, a brief section addresses teaching children from diverse populations.
- Together, these documents—the Academic Plan, the addendum, and Literacy Across the Curriculum—provide a focus and direction to the district's work, as well as a framework that delineates the supports and programs the district will provide to deliver the core curriculum. During the Council's visit, teachers and administrators expressed interest in having more guidance and support in delivering the instructional program for ELLs. The district could clearly use more documents that outline grade-level expectations and performance indicators in the content areas and ESL.

The team learned that district staff have been engaged in revising and improving the district's curriculum documents (curriculum and pacing guides) used prior to Dr. Williams' arrival. During the 2009-10 school year, district staff members increased their efforts to revise the district-designed documents to implement the state's ELA standards, but they are waiting for new state standards for ELA/ESL, as well as state decisions about adopting the Common Core Standards. The team's charge was to review the district's ELL programs and not the broader instructional program, so the team reviewed a sample of district curriculum documents to examine how they helped teachers work with ELLs. The team had a number of general observations about the documents and how they related to ELLs:

- ✚ The documents reviewed closely follow the New York State Learning Standards, with some district adaptations.
- ✚ The documents feature texts to use with students having difficulty and with students who can handle more advanced reading.
- ✚ The district's Web site provides various teacher resources, including pacing guides based on the adopted textbooks and sample lesson plans.

- ✚ The mathematics pacing guide has links to supplemental exercises that fill gaps and provide helpful links to such supplemental material as *Suggested Mathematical Language*.
- ✚ The ELA and the mathematics curriculum and teacher resource materials, however, make no reference to English language learners and provide no links to related standards (ESL) or helpful resources for teachers of ELLs.

Some of these observations prompted recommendations later in this report.

- The district has made significant investments in the purchase and adoption of a districtwide program and textbooks to make the instructional program more consistent. The district has adopted a variety of textbooks for ELL programs as well. *Trofeos* (Harcourt) and *Estrellita* are used for grades K-6 in bilingual education programs and dual language immersion. The Santillana Series is used in bilingual education programs in grades 7-12. In the Freestanding ESL programs (see later sections for descriptions), *Moving into English* is used for the Levels 1 and 2 of English proficiency (beginner and intermediate) in grades K-5; *High-Points* is used for levels 1 and 2 in grades 6-8 and for grade 9-12; and *Visions* is the textbook for the lower levels of proficiency in grades 9-12. The Freestanding ESL plan is used for the English literacy block in transitional bilingual classes, but it was unclear if the plan is used in the bilingual Spanish-dominant program.

For both ESL and bilingual education models in grades K-12, when ELLs reach the advanced level of proficiency on the NYSESLAT, they receive the district's regular ELA program (Direct Instruction, Voyager, Harcourt) based on their skill levels. ELLs in grades 6-12 also receive instruction using *Language!* by Sopris West.

- The district's overall instructional theory of action involves managed instruction, introduced as a way of bringing greater consistency and instructional coherence to teaching strategies from school-to-school. The program includes instructional time schedules, pacing benchmarks in general education that are matched to the materials, and lesson plans.
- The district has instituted a required 90-minute reading block every day and a 70-minute math block, along with a 30-minute writing period, and it has started to use more language strategies across the curriculum.
- The district's instructional planning and investments were clearly focused on the 70 percent or so of students who were scoring below proficient levels. The district has a clearly tiered II and III intervention or RTI system, including Direct Instruction for students who are falling behind instructional expectations.
- The district has common planning time for teachers in some schools, including both general and ESL teachers. ELL program compliance documents (CR154) indicate that planning time is provided. Staff indicated to the team that this was being done in schools where building leadership was supportive of the practice and collaboration among teachers was high.

- The school district offers full-day pre-K programs for all students. This has the potential of improving language and vocabulary skills among all students, including ELLs.
- The district developed draft ESL curriculum benchmarks for its early childhood program in 2007. The document is comprehensive and aligned to the five ESL standards and ESL performance indicators issued by the New York State Department of Education. The document, developed by a team of certified ESL instructors is described as containing the "team's vision of effective educational standards" for ELLs. The document states, moreover, "The vision includes developing proficiency in English, promoting academic success and encouraging awareness of the culture and norms of the school system and society while recognizing the importance of maintaining the students' native languages."
- The superintendent has created a special district of low-performing schools to which the district is providing targeted resources and attention. These schools have an extended day, additional professional development, reduced class sizes, additional guidance counselors, and social workers. These schools also have additional aides that have special language skills. Most of these special district schools include those that are on the state's SURR list (Schools Under Registration Review) but have made substantial progress over the last several years.⁴ (In the 2008-09 school year, six Buffalo's schools came off the SURR list.) The performance index the state uses to determine the SURR list does not disaggregate data by student group or appear to have an ELL component.
- The district uses Acuity (CTB/McGraw-Hill) in the special district schools in grades three through eight. The program includes predictive assessments presumably aligned with state tests and measures student growth. However, some staff voiced skepticism that the alignment was tight.

New York City has a similar system of Instructionally Targeted Assessments (ITAs) that were designed with district educators to measure skills commonly taught in specific instructional periods. ITAs can be customized at the school level to create classroom assessments or make classroom assignments.

- The district does have an intervention program—Academic Intervention Services (AIS)—funded by federal Title I dollars. The Buffalo schools provide interventions through the program within the general education environment. Services include scheduling options (including additional class time), AIS teachers, computer-assisted instruction, co-teaching, small group instruction, reduced teacher/student ratios, and extended learning opportunities.

AIS is jointly coordinated by the school-based administrators and central office administration—community superintendents, directors of reading, ELA and mathematics coordinators, and the director of special education. New York State regulations require that districts provide AIS to students who score below expectations on state assessments and/or who are at risk of not achieving State Learning Standards. ELLs are also eligible

⁴ SURR schools are those that are farthest from meeting state standards and face the possibility of closure if they remain on the list for several years without improving. The state of New York began this program in 1989.

for AIS based on LAB-R (Language Assessment Battery-Revised) and NYSESLAT results. If support and intervention is needed beyond the general education environment, teachers request assistance from an Instructional Support Service Team (ISST) that includes three to five individuals representing general and special education, a member of the reading support team, and members of the other support staff (mathematics, support, guidance, and speech). The Strategic Support Team did not hear much about this program and could not pin down how it was coordinated with the Department of Multilingual Education.

- The Department of Multilingual Education provided a number of program and course descriptions for ESL and Spanish native-language arts in high schools. The district appears to have an extensive number of Spanish-language texts.
- The district participated in the New York State Education Department Office of Bilingual Education School Quality Review (SQR) Pilot in 2005-06. The state used a comprehensive self-assessment tool (the Quality Review of Services for LEP/ELLs) in order to examine the quality of programs and services provided to students of limited English proficiency (LEPs)/ELLs. The review and its self-assessment tool helped provide schools with a comprehensive look at how well they were implementing programming for ELLs, and it helped the district's new bilingual education director implement a number of department improvements. Several schools participated.
- ✚ The team reviewed reports produced by the SQR project on two schools—Frank A. Sedita and School 33—and found the review to be comprehensive and a good way to gauge the instructional quality and academic rigor of bilingual education and ESL programming. The tool also gauges whether programs
 - a) align with the core curriculum,
 - b) demonstrate the rigor and effectiveness of the professional development plan,
 - c) reflect the support teachers receive from regional and school instructional specialists in implementing best practices in the classroom,
 - d) comply with language allocation policies,
 - e) benefit from rigorous monitoring and assessment, and
 - f) improve communications with ELL families.
- ✚ In addition, the tool is used to provide more technical assistance to help schools implement their ELL programs according to New York State Seven Essential Elements of Effective Programs for ELLs:
 - a) High standards for ELLs
 - b) Strong literacy development for ELLs
 - c) Qualified/well-trained educators for ELLs
 - d) School/district leadership committed to educational excellence for ELLs
 - e) Positive school climate for ELLs
 - f) Parent/community involvement
 - g) Assessment and accountability

- ✚ The School Quality Review and its self-assessment tool are detailed enough to provide school leadership, instructional staff members, and support staff with a clear path for improving their ELL programs. The tool is organized around a number of procedural, contextual, and programmatic components of effective ELL programs:
 - a) Student Identification/Placement—This involves procedural compliance with timeframes, assessment tools, and parental notification of student placement.
 - b) Leadership--School leadership has a clear and comprehensive vision of its services to ELL students and is knowledgeable of all mandates that support ELLs. School staff is aware of educational, cultural, and special needs of the ELL community.
 - c) Quality Programs—These components of ELL programs include the Seven Essential Elements of Effective Programs for ELLs and the New York State guidelines for ESL and ELA. Other indicators are model-specific, such as those for dual language immersion.
 - d) Language Allocation Policy—This includes knowledge of language allocation policy (LAP), implementation of LAP, and LAP in bilingual education.
 - e) ESL/ELA Units of Instruction—Schools provide the state-required units of ESL and/or ELA instruction to all ELLs.
 - f) Transitional and Two-way Bilingual Education Programs—These include indicators on compliance with state law, LAP and instruction in both languages, and consistency with state standards.
 - g) Native-language instruction (L2)—This is aligned to state standards, included in lesson plans and student groupings, and consistent with delivery of instruction and student work.
 - h) Grades 9-12—ESL/bilingual education program provides the full complement of courses leading to high school graduation, and ELLs are prepared to take the required state Regents exams.
- ✚ The quality review includes an examination of a school’s instructional program on 24 specific indicators, many of which are embedded in the sections already described. For example, the 24 indicators include references to instructional materials, instruction being provided in English and Spanish, ELL-instructional strategies, standards-based curriculum, and ESL scaffolding.
- ✚ Under the quality reviews, school administrators and staff are expected to understand language assessment programs and policies and administration procedures (including accommodations).

- ✚ The reviews include assessments of qualifications of ESL teachers, certification, and language proficiency, as well as requirements related to educational assistants. The analyses also include probes on the nature, relevance, coordination, and quality of professional development related to ELLs, as well as indications of whether the professional development was based on ELL-proficiency data on the NYSESLAT, state ELA tests, the Regents exams, and/or other assessments.
- ✚ Finally, the reviews examine parent involvement and support services to see how well the school complies with various parental notification requirements, supports community involvement, and provides instructional and non-instructional support services through Title I and other intervention efforts. (See sections VIII and IX of the review documents.)

Areas of Concern

- The districtwide proficiency rates for ELLs are very low. In fact, the performance data on ELLs suggest that achievement for ELLs was almost identical to students with disabilities. District staff members were not unable to articulate why this was the case, nor was there surprise that these two groups had similar achievement scores. One individual interviewed indicated that the Title III program operated more like a remedial program than an English acquisition effort. In general, the team concluded that expectations for the academic achievement of ELLs in the Buffalo Public Schools were very low.
- The three-year Academic Achievement Plan (AAP) emphasizes early literacy development, the five basic components of reading, and the need for accommodations, but there was little mention in the plan of the developmental issues that are unique to second language acquisition. The district’s plan does contain the five literacy components articulated by the National Reading Panel, but it does not include key findings from the National Panel on Language-Minority Children and Youth. An important finding from the research by this panel involves word-level components of literacy (e.g, decoding, spelling) that may show equal levels of performance among ELLs and non-ELLs—but its research also indicates that performance on text-level skills, such as comprehension, requires language-specific interventions to achieve similar achievement levels for ELLs and non-ELLs. The panel indicates that, “Second-language learners differ in some significant ways from first-language learners in literacy learning because they bring to this challenge an additional and different set of language resources and experiences.”⁵
- The team was repeatedly referred to the Addendum to the AAP to examine the district’s efforts specific to ELLs. The team’s review of the Addendum, however, revealed further inattention to ELL achievement issues, except for a vision of ELL programming that was largely remedial and “add-on” rather than integrated in nature. The Addendum (unlike the AAP itself) does have an entire section devoted to ELL programming and is valuable in articulating an educational pathway for ELLs. But the section itself could be read by

⁵ Shanahan, T. and D. August (Ed) “Developing Literacy in Second Language Learners: Report of the National Panel on Language-Minority Children and Youth” Washington, D.C., 2006.

district staff as reinforcing the notion that ELLs are the exclusive responsibility of the Department of Multilingual Education rather than the shared responsibility of the larger instructional unit and district. Other than the multilingual section of the Addendum, there was little mention of ELL issues. In many ways, the document itself reflected the siloed nature of programming that the team heard during the interviews.

- References to the instructional needs of ELLs in the AAP and Addendum are framed as accommodations rather than reflecting unique language needs. For example, the document reads, "The Reading Initiative will allow teacher to differentiate instruction and to make accommodations for ELLs and students with disabilities." However, no instructional differentiation is articulated for ELLs of differing ability groupings (intensive, strategic, advanced, and benchmark). Instead, the plan provides only broad direction for ELL instruction:
 - ✚ Instruction should target acquisition and literacy development.
 - ✚ Provide additional support for ELLs for English proficiency and academic language development.
 - ✚ Provide appropriate reading and writing supports and instruction in English by an ESL teacher.
 - ✚ Address oral proficiency and basic literacy.
- The instructional plan by grade level for ELLs contains very general language that is found mostly under the *Universal Access* section of the AAP. The plan includes a general commitment to provide access to ELLs, but it does not lay out expectations for ELL achievement as clearly as stated in the school board's policy for ELLs. The grade-by-grade tables in the plan do not consistently describe the competencies and skills that ELLs should develop. Instead, the plan lists materials and programs to be used to provide instruction and access to ELLs.
- The AAP makes no reference to English language development and development of academic English in the content areas. For example, the plan's instructional vision for mathematics describes the importance of language in becoming mathematically proficient: "An important way in which children learn mathematics is by talking about it. Children need to be able to think about math, to listen to ideas, to write about math, and to work with partners allowing for new ways of solving problems." But the math section makes no reference to the mathematical language that will allow ELLs or general education students to be proficient in math. Similarly, ELL instructional strategies are not included in the professional development supports described in other sections of the plan, except for social studies and the ELL program section itself.
- The district's "Literacy Across the Curriculum" initiative, which was specifically adopted to address the needs of low-performing students, does not incorporate the needs of ELLs. Issues related to literacy development in a second language and vocabulary acquisition specific to ELLs are absent from the document as it focuses on developing intermediate

and secondary literacy (comprehension, meta-cognition, critical thinking, and writing). The document mentions the value of diversity but is silent on language diversity and the complex pedagogical issues or teaching strategies related to developing literacy in second language learners. In addition, the research references do not include research on ELLs.

- The district's strong overall literacy effort does not appear to use the native-language skills of ELLs to serve as building blocks for literacy in either the native language or English. For example, the team was told that the district places a strong emphasis on early-childhood programs to learn how to read in English. However, some 50 percent of the district's ELLs speak a language other than Spanish and do not receive native-language support. Consequently, the district has opted for early literacy instruction in English with little native-language support. The approach assumes that ELLs come to school with few language skills but are able to communicate and comprehend in their home language. These native-language assets are building blocks for acquiring another language and other modes (reading and writing) of language that appear not to be recognized.
- The district's literacy strategy for building comprehension skills among ELLs is poorly defined. The team saw little evidence that the literacy initiative the district was using was sufficiently strong to build skills much beyond phonemic awareness, phonics, and basic fluency. The district lacked a coherent approach to English language development, vocabulary acquisition, and comprehension for ELLs. It appeared to the team that the approach the district was using would likely result in ELLs slipping farther behind academically as they got older and more complex skills eluded them due to gaps in the development of foundation skills.
- It appeared to the team that the district's instructional program was largely defined and driven by the adopted commercial textbooks and implemented roughly along publisher specifications, and did not include specific ELL components unless imbedded in the commercial texts. In other cases, the ELL components to the instructional program seemed like add-ons or translations of the general program rather than integrated or differentiated elements of a broader instructional strategy. For example, professional development in ELA at the pre-K level was largely handled by Houghton-Mifflin consultants. At the Kindergarten level, there was extensive professional development on DIBELS, SRA, and Harcourt. Voyager training and professional development existed at the elementary grades. The team did not see evidence that the programs or materials had been modified at district request in order to handle ELL-specific instructional issues.
- A document prepared by the Department of Multilingual Education provides a detailed description of the literacy block for ELLs, including how it is applied in all three ELL models the district uses. (See later sections.) The matrix in the document is very specific about which textbooks are to be used for the literacy block at each grade level for students at various proficiency and ability levels (intensive, strategic, advanced, and benchmark). The document also lays out a variety of state requirements with respect to ELLs, and staff members are referred to other documents for more information. Yet the document does not always give principals and teachers clear direction about how to

implement program requirements. The uncertainty that principals have about how to use the documents is contributing to irregular implementation of the program. For example, the document states:

Depending upon the number of LEP students in a building, the program model they are in, and how they are distributed across the grade levels, it may be necessary to group students across grade levels in order to meet program requirements. All students must show they are receiving the required amount of ESL and/or NLA if participating within the Bilingual Program. Schools must also show students are receiving their other required course work as spelled out by CR Part 100.

But principals may be unclear about why and how they should be grouping students across grade levels and how to apply the Language Allocation Policy, for example, to a group or how to mesh the ELL program with the school's general education program. That lack of clarity adds to inconsistency in program implementation.

- The “instructional time schedule” and the literacy blocks do not articulate instructional priorities for ELLs; nor is there mention of best practices or instructional strategies for teaching ELLs. For example, there is no mention of English-language development (ELD) in any of the content areas. This was consistent with teacher comments that the team heard about the lack of strategies to help ELL students handle the rich language involved in state math exams.
 - ✚ Judging from the documents they reviewed and interviews they held, it appeared to the team that the ESL period might be all the ELD instruction that a student receives, and there is not much time for that.
 - ✚ The sample schedule provides only 1.5 hours for music, art, and physical education over a six-day period. These activities are important for ELLs in developing English proficiency, particularly when they include English language development strategies and involve interactions with English-proficient students.
- The district may be using some intervention programs (e.g., *Language!*) that might not be best suited for ELLs. The Academic Achievement Plan indicates that ELLs in ESL use *Language!* or Hampton Brown for literacy instruction at intensive level (I) in grades 7 and 8. Staff from the Department of Multilingual Education, however, indicated that Hampton Brown is the ESL program for sixth through eighth grade ELLs.
 - ✚ *Language!* is a literacy intervention program intended for students who are reading three or more years below grade level and is used with both native-English speakers and ELLs. The publisher's materials provide a general description of the program's six-step literacy instruction. Although the publisher claims that the program is effective with ELLs, their materials make no mention of specific components or adaptations for ELLs.

✚ The team found no studies or published research on the effectiveness of *Language!* with ELLs.

- Of the 30 or so district schools that serve ELLs, more than half (16) are either in corrective action or in reconstitution, so supplemental education services (SES) are offered in these schools under the federal Title I program. The team saw no evidence that most SES programs were explicitly addressing the unique needs of ELLs. The teams heard that non-English-speaking parents often don't know how to choose among the SES programs or are unsure what they are getting. This issue is particularly challenging for parents who are ELLs and are unfamiliar with both the school system and NCLB-related program requirements.
- The district appears to use some intervention and direct-instruction programs without tailoring them to the needs of ELLs or modifying them to promote English-language development among ELLs. Moreover, staff members interviewed by the team indicated that some direct-instruction programs were used as supplementary services for ESL students if the school was able to fit the program into ESL instruction. The Division of Teaching and Learning works with JP Associates to provide professional development and coaching on the implementation of direct-instruction interventions, although the group does not appear from its Website to provide assistance with ELL instructional strategies.
- The district's draft curriculum benchmark document is not entirely consistent with other documents, nor is it a practical guide for implementing ESL standards in the instructional program. The 2007 draft reviewed by the team covered only grades 2-4. The introductory section of the benchmarks describes a vision for ELLs that is not entirely aligned with the 2006 board policy for ELLs and other documents the team reviewed. The 2006 board policy focuses on providing the necessary instructional supports to ensure that ELLs have equal access to the general curriculum, acquire English proficiency, and experience postsecondary success.

The vision described in the draft curriculum benchmarks includes an additional element—recognizing the importance of maintaining the student's native languages. However, the current board policy and other district documents do not expressly include maintaining native languages as an explicit goal. Bilingual education programs do use native language as part of the instructional program to help ELLs access content and transition into English, and dual immersion programs maintain Spanish as an explicit and expected programmatic goal. The absence of such consistency only confuses administrators and instructional staff about which document and practice they should follow—or staff members simply decide to make up their own policies.

The team knows that district staff devoted considerable time and energy to the curriculum benchmark document and to customizing the New York State materials on ESLs to the school district, but the effort misses the mark in the sense that it fails to make the state documents more understandable on how to infuse ESL standards into instruction. The team was not surprised that most staff members interviewed appeared to be unaware of

state’s ESL standards. Still, the team was concerned that the benchmark documents did not make matters clearer. The team had several specific concerns:

- ✚ The benchmark document was too broad, so it was of minimal use in showing teachers and principals what instruction for ELLs should look like. The team did not know if the district had developed a set of activities such as the kind of sample tasks produced by the New York State Department of Education.
- ✚ The document does not help teachers and others understand what achievement looks like at various levels of English proficiency. The definitions of proficiency levels in the Buffalo document detract from the state documents by using highly summarized descriptions for each proficiency level and collapsing all four language modalities (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) into one.
- ✚ The document does not reference other curriculum documents, nor does the team consider it to be a curriculum benchmark document *per se*, because it lists performance indicators for ELLs without specific linkages to the curriculum.⁶
- ✚ The draft benchmark document is not aligned to the district’s classroom observation tools.
- The acquisition of instructional materials is not well coordinated with the Department of Multilingual Education. The team heard that content-area directors often select instructional materials to be used with ELLs without coordinating with the bilingual unit.
 - ✚ The “Literacy Block for ELL Tables” indicated that Moving into English (MIE)—a K-6 program from the same publisher as *Trofeos* (Harcourt)—was to be used for students who were in the beginner or intermediate levels of English proficiency, but staff indicated that the program was being used for upper-level ESL students. According to the publisher’s Web site, the program focuses on phonemic awareness, phonics, language exploration, comprehension, and fluency to help students with English language acquisition.
 - ✚ The team did not see evidence that the programs were aligned with state standards or with each other, although they were produced by the same publisher. (The district or an independent third-party should establish this alignment.)
- As a rule, the district was unable to determine the number of ELLs receiving instruction with which programs. For example, the district could not provide the team with data on how many ELLs were in classrooms using Direct Instruction (DI). The team’s review of the sample instructional schedule indicated that ELLs at the advanced level on the NYSESLAT received instruction in ELA with Direct Instruction, Voyager, and Harcourt, but one could not determine how many ELLs participated in which programs.

⁶ “Benchmark” means a level of performance or outcome against which a group (such as students) might be compared.

- In general, it wasn't clear to the team that the district had a firm handle on what programs, materials, or strategies were actually being used with ELLs in which schools.
- The district-created pacing guides do not provide teachers with any guidance on differentiating instruction for ELLs. Instead, the district relies mostly on the publisher-produced sequence on textbook content. The team heard few comments about the pacing guides from district staff or teachers.
- There were no pacing guides *per se* or curriculum for the ELL programs specifically. Instead, school-based staff members are guided by the instructional time schedules for the ELL program models. (See additional discussion of this under the program design section of this report.)
 - ✚ The Department of Multilingual Education issues an annual calendar that provides schools with a pacing guide on instructional units to be covered by three specific dates during the school year. This pacing guide was issued at the beginning of the 2008-09 school year as part of the district's efforts to increase fidelity of ELL program implementation.
 - ✚ The team was concerned, moreover, that the three levels of instruction for general education (intensive [Direct Instruction], strategic, and benchmark) were aligned to English proficiency levels in a way that presumed that ELLs with low English-language proficiency were also low level in literacy proficiency generally. This alignment also sequenced learning for ELLs in a way that assumed that they must first learn English before tackling complex literacy skills generally. Moreover, if ELL programs were following the sample schedules without appropriate adjustments, then it might explain, in part, why ELLs were at lower levels of proficiency in ELA and across the board, i.e., because ELLs are being taught with programs meant for the lowest levels of proficiency. In this way, it seemed entirely plausible that some ELLs could start their instructional programs at very low levels and then stay there without moving up.
 - ✚ In effective bilingual education and dual language immersion programs, it is quite possible that a student will show a higher level of mastery of particular literacy skills, e.g., summarization, in their stronger language than in their L2 (whether this is English for the ELL or Spanish for the non-Spanish speaker). The sample schedule does not allow for variations.
 - ✚ It was unclear to the team whether schools were making appropriate adjustments to the instruction of ELLs based on their ability levels as measured by some diagnostic instrument *versus* a simple presumption of low literacy levels.
- The district's early childhood education programs enroll a higher proportion of ELLs than exist districtwide, but the district does not have an explicit priority to hire pre-K teachers with an ESL background or a plan to train those who are hired to work with ELLs. ELLs comprise about 8 percent of the district's total enrollment, but are between

10 to 20 percent of the pre-K enrollment. Instead, pre-K general education teachers rely on the Department of Multilingual Education for support in working with ELLs.

- The superintendent’s school-improvement district (SSID) lacks a strategic approach to improve the achievement of ELLs. The schools in this special unit have extended-day and extended-year initiatives, but while at least 16 of these schools have substantial numbers of ELLs, there was no strategy by which the district would handle the academic needs of these students.⁷ Moreover, the community superintendent responsible for overseeing the district indicated that there was no ELL-specific strategy in place to address this population. Finally, the team was told that schools in the special district had reading and math coaches but that none were assigned to work on ELL needs specifically as part of their responsibilities.
- The composition of the SSID has changed over the years, but it now synonymous with the district’s SURR schools. These schools are subject to scheduling built around the delivery of Direct Instruction and other literacy programs and instructional interventions. This may be negating the scheduling of ESL instruction for ELLs. When scheduled for services, ELLs are pulled out of the English language arts or other core courses.
- The district does not appear to have a strategy to handle the language needs of over-age students or ELLs who need extra help with English or the content areas.
- It was very difficult for anyone to determine how many ELLs were being served in each of the school system’s general education reading programs, so it was consequently difficult to establish what the differing effects of those programs were on ELLs. For example, schools that participated in Reading First often had few, if any, ELLs (PS 27, 31, 53, 54, 65, 72, 80, and 82), and the Academic Achievement Plan referring to these schools simply had “does not apply” in the sections referring to ELLs.
- Many of the issues identified in the 2006-07 School Quality Reviews (SQRs) were consistent with what the Council’s team found when it visited the district in 2009. The SQR self-assessment tool is based on school self-reports on ELL program implementation, so it is understandable that the Council team noted some of the same inconsistencies during its interviews and school visits two years later. The following findings from the two schools reviewed by the SQR were also noted by the Council team:
 - ✚ *Implementation of the core curriculum is not consistent, nor is the use of two languages in bilingual classrooms.* Schools were not providing the required number of ESL and ELA units to all ELLs, and content area instruction was not fully aligned with the standards. Native-language arts instruction was not rigorous or focused. Schools were likely to report meeting the quality indicators for implementing the ESL programs, but the curriculum indicators revealed spotty knowledge and application of ESL strategies.

⁷ The list of schools found in the Addendum served over 1,103 ELLs or about 39 percent of all ELLs in the district.

- ✚ *Schools claimed to address the needs of ELLs in their improvement plans and mission statements, but implementation of plans was lagging.* Both schools reviewed in the SQR reported that their planning documents addressed ELL needs and that school leadership and staff understood the essential elements of effective ELL programming. However, both reports indicated that program goals and requirements were not met. For example, the reports indicated that principals provide joint planning time for general and ESL/Bilingual teachers, but the team heard that this practice was not common from school to school.
- ✚ *Schools were still struggling with implementing the Language Allocation Policy (LAP).* Schools varied in the degree to which school staff understood and implemented the policy with any consistency. Even when a school claimed that instruction was aligned to the LAP, it often admitted that a minority of staff understood when and why students' native language and English were used for instruction.
- ✚ *High marks were given to teachers in addressing the needs of diverse ELLs, but the marks did not translate into effective language development instruction.* In both schools reviewed, teachers got high marks for facilitating academic growth among ELLs, but the report indicated that lesson planning for language development was irregular and content areas were inconsistently taught in native language and/or English. (The Council's team was not in accord with the finding that there had been substantial academic growth.)
- ✚ *Schools did not meet all quality indicators related to staff qualifications.* The team heard that not all bilingual/ESL teachers were appropriately certified but could not obtain data to verify or refute the claim. It was clear, however, that schools did not have a plan for ongoing recruitment of such teachers or a strategy for ensuring that current teachers were working on their certifications. Similarly, educational assistants did not consistently meet requirements under NCLB.
- ✚ *Schools' efforts to provide professional development on ELL needs and instruction varied widely.* Beyond the instructional staff who worked directly with ELLs, schools did not consistently ensure that general education staff participated in ELL-related professional development or that professional development for general educators incorporated ELL strategies. The SQRs of both schools reported limited professional development opportunities for staff who worked directly with ELLs. In one school, staff members were not provided opportunities to participate in regional, local, and state professional development sessions on ELLs. Both schools reported that some in-service activities included ELL-relevant topics but that new bilingual and ESL teachers were not provided mentoring services. Some teachers were given opportunities to visit other schools to see best practices for ELLs; others were not.
- ✚ *Self-reported practices on ELL assessment requirements and procedures appeared to be statements of compliance rather than realistic assessments of school staff practices.* The SQRs on both schools indicated that staff fully understood various assessment requirements, but the team found that the understanding was far from

widespread. Moreover, the SQR indicated that fewer than half of the teachers met with administrators to discuss the ELL testing data and disaggregated results to inform instruction.

- ✚ *There was generally poor communication with parents regarding ELL programs and program placements.* Both schools reviewed indicated that they provided few orientation sessions for ELL parents and made little attempt to get them to attend.
- ✚ *Schools' efforts to improve parent involvement and offer support were spotty.* Though the SQR reports indicated that schools made efforts to improve parental involvement, the team did not hear from parents that such efforts were having much effect. One SQR report indicated that the parent coordinator or family liaison did not provide support services and information to parents of ELLs.
- The SQRs are not linked explicitly to the accountability system for either principals or community superintendents, and findings from the process would not necessarily trigger any action. There does not appear to be a formal process to ensure implementation of the SQR recommendations. In addition, it appears that the community superintendents are not involved in the review process or in any subsequent follow up. Finally, both schools involved in the last SQR have new principals that would not have necessarily implemented the SQR proposals.

D. Program Design and Delivery System

This section presents the team's findings and observations on the Buffalo school district's overall program design and delivery system for English language learners.

Positive Findings

- The district's Department of Multilingual Education has prepared documents describing the design and components of the ELL program. As part of its ELL program improvement effort that began in earnest in 2006, the department started to work on the instructional models that the district was using at the time. According to the department, the two most commonly used instructional models in the district were bilingual education (as required by New York State law) and ESL. The district now describes its programs as follows:

✚ **Bilingual Education**

- a) *Transitional Models*—These models support the academic and linguistic development of the student in the native language and in English until they achieve a level of proficiency that allows them to participate fully and be successful in general education classes taught entirely in English. The bilingual education models are required by New York State law in cases where “20 or more pupils with limited English proficiency of the same grade level are assigned to a building, all of whom have the same native language which is other than

English.”⁸ *Bilingual transitional (40-60)* is offered to ELLs who are not as strong in their Spanish proficiency levels but need native language support in acquiring English proficiency. This model provides 40 percent of instruction in Spanish and 60 percent in English. Students who have reached the intermediate level of English proficiency participate in this model of instruction. And *Bilingual Spanish dominant (60-40)* is offered to ELLs who have higher proficiency in Spanish than in English (below the intermediate level of proficiency). In this model, 60 percent of instruction is provided in Spanish and 40 percent in English. As students increase their English proficiency they move towards receiving more instruction in English. The literacy block for this model is provided in Spanish. [See Exhibits 16 and 17.]

**Exhibit 16. Literacy Block for ELLs in Bilingual Education
60/40 Spanish-Dominant Model**

<i>Grades</i>	<i>Intensive</i>	<i>Strategic</i>	<i>Advanced</i>
Pre-K	<i>Estrellita</i> Pre-K Program	<i>Estrellita</i> Pre-K Program	<i>Estrellita</i> Pre-K Program
Grades K-3	<i>Trofeos</i> Intervention Kit <i>Estrellita</i> Accelerated Phonemic Awareness/Phonics Program	<i>Trofeos</i> Intervention Kit	Harcourt <i>Trofeos</i>
Grades 4-6	<i>Trofeos</i> Intervention Kit	<i>Trofeos</i> Intervention Kit	Harcourt <i>Trofeos</i>
Grades 7-12	Santillana Serie Siglo XXI	Santillana Serie Siglo XXI	Santillana Serie Siglo XXI

b) *Dual Language Model*—This model provides instruction in two languages (L1 and L2)—English and Spanish in the case of Buffalo—to students who are native speakers of either L1 or L2. The goal in this model is not to transition into full English instruction but rather to develop full bilingual literacy in both languages of instruction. The program receives strong praise and support from parents.

 **Freestanding ESL**—This model (English as a Second Language) is the New York State required minimum service for students who have been identified as limited English proficient. ESL is a specific discipline taught by certified ESL teachers. The Freestanding ESL (FESL) program is composed of a language arts instructional component (that includes required units of ESL and units of ELA instruction) and a content-area instructional component. Parents may opt out of having their child receive bilingual education, but New York State law does not allow parents to opt out of ESL if their child is identified as LEP. The Buffalo Public Schools use three models of Freestanding ESL services—

a) *Push-in model*—The ESL teacher works in the classroom with the content-area teacher to provide language and content-area instruction simultaneously.

⁸ Part 154 Regulations. 154.4 District comprehensive plan and program requirements for districts claiming state aid for the operation of programs for pupils with limited English proficiency.

- b) *Pull-out model*—The ESL teacher pulls LEP/ELLs from various classrooms to provide these students English language development.
- c) *Self-contained model*—ELLs are placed in an ESL class for the entire day, and the ESL teacher provides core subject and language instruction.

Exhibit 17. State-Required Units (36 minutes of instruction) of ELA and ESL for ELLs Based on Proficiency Levels in English

Grades	<i>Beginner</i>		<i>Intermediate</i>		<i>Advanced</i>	
	ESL	ELA	ESL	ELA	ESL	ELA
K-8	2 units	0	2 units	0	1 unit	1 unit
9-12	3 units	0	2 units	0	1 unit	1 unit



Literacy Block for ELLs in FESL Model and 40/60 Transitional Bilingual Education

Grades	<i>Beginner</i>	<i>Intermediate</i>	<i>Advanced</i>
K- 5	1 pd-Moving into English 1 pd-ESL language skills (36 min. x 2 = 72 minutes)	1 pd-Moving into English 1 pd-ESL language skills	District ELA program (by skill level) – DI, Voyager, Harcourt 1 pd of ESL
6 - 8	1 pd-High Point (Level A) 1 pd-ESL language skills	1 pd-High Point (Level B/C) 1 pd-ESL language skills	District ELA program (by skill level) – DI, Voyager, Harcourt, <i>Language!</i> 1 pd of ESL
9 - 12	2 pds- Visions (Level A) 1 pd- ESL content vocabulary, skill development	2 pds- Visions (Level A/B) 1 pd- ESL content vocabulary, skill development	District ELA program (by skill level) – DI, Voyager, Harcourt, <i>Language!</i> 1 pd of ESL

- Buffalo provides the same literacy block in both the bilingual transitional (40/60) model and Freestanding ESL model. The literacy block is designed to ensure that ELLs receive the state-required numbers of ESL and ELA units of instruction based on student English-proficiency levels. (See Exhibit 18.)
- The Department of Multilingual Education provides documents and other strategies to promoted fidelity in implementing the model. The department outlined these efforts in a memorandum dated August 22, 2007 to all school principals with bilingual/ESL programs:
 - ✚ *Districtwide ELL textbook adoption and purchase of books.* The district purchased ESL and native-language arts textbooks, provided in-service training on the new textbooks, and made them available in time for the beginning of the 2007-08 school year.

- ✚ *Improved linkages between schools and central office support.* The department specifically requested that each school select ESL teachers to be liaisons with the department.

The 2007 memorandum provided critical information to schools on the requirements, resources, and central office supports in implementing ELL programs. It reminded principals of New York State requirements on units of ESL instruction they needed to provide based on students’ grade levels and English proficiency levels on the NYSESLAT. It let schools know that program fidelity would be monitored with walk-throughs and data collection. The three-page memo outlined the literacy block for all three ELL models described earlier and asked for cooperation in ensuring (1) that ESL teachers not be pulled from their instructional duties to “fill in” for teachers who were absent or to perform other duties, (2) that ESL teachers use the appropriate materials in their classrooms, and (3) that ELL students receive the required services daily.

- Other documents the team indicate that, in 2007 and 2008, the district was trying to ramp up its efforts to improve bilingual/ESL programs in the schools. One key document outlined sample instructional schedules for all three ELL models. The time schedule is divided into two categories of three levels each. One category corresponded to the district’s intensive, strategic, and benchmark ability groupings that determine the type of program used to provide general education to students. The second category corresponds to the first three levels of proficiency on the NYSESLAT: beginner, intermediate, and advanced. The Department of Multilingual Education provides sample instruction time schedules for the FESL and the bilingual education programs. (See exhibits 18 and 19 below.) These tables illustrate how the instructional minutes for literacy, ESL, and content areas line up over a six-day cycle. The tables provide information on—
 - ✚ the required minutes of instruction for each content area
 - ✚ the textbooks adopted for the 90-minute literacy block (district's English language arts) by skill level
 - ✚ the textbooks adopted for the ELL program by English proficiency level
 - ✚ the textbooks adopted for the Native language arts (Spanish) of the 60/40 bilingual education model
 - ✚ the minute distribution of language of instruction (Spanish/English) for the 60/40 and 40/60 bilingual education models.

Exhibit 18. Grade 1 Instructional Time Schedule for FESL and 40/60 Transitional Bilingual Education

<i>By Skill Level</i>	<i>Intensive</i>	<i>Strategic</i>	<i>Benchmark</i>
90-minute reading block	Direct Instruction	(Harcourt <i>Trophies</i> ELL Component)	(Harcourt <i>Trophies</i>)
<i>By English</i>	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced

Proficiency Level			
30-minute supplemental period	<i>Moving into English</i>	<i>Moving into English</i> Listening/speaking development	Strategic: <i>Moving into English</i> Listening/speaking development
30-minute differentiated period	Newcomer SIFE High Beginner	<i>Moving into English</i> 1 pd-ESL language skills	Strategic: <i>Moving into English</i> Benchmark: 30-minute area work
70-minute math block	No differentiation provided No ELL-specific strategies or materials are listed		
30-minute social studies period (3 days per 6-day cycle)	No differentiation provided No ELL-specific strategies or materials are listed		
30-minute sciences period (3 days per 6-day cycle)	No differentiation provided No ELL-specific strategies or materials are listed		
30-minute music period (once per 6-day cycle)	Prescriptive minute allocation of activities		
30-minute art period (once per 6-day cycle)	Prescriptive minute allocation of activities		
30-minute PE period (once per 6-day cycle)	Prescriptive minute allocation of activities		

Exhibit 19. Sample Grade 1 Instructional Time Schedule for Bilingual Education Models (60/40 Spanish Dominant)

ESL instructional program is the same for both Bilingual Education Models			
By English Proficiency Level	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced
30-minute supplemental period	<i>Moving into English</i> (none listed for 40/60 model)	<i>Moving into English</i>	Direct Instruction (and/or Voyager for 40/60 model)
30-minute differentiated period	ESL language skills (none listed for 40/60 model)	ESL language skills	ESL language skills
Native Language Arts Block only for 60/40 Model as the 90-minute literacy block			
By Skill Level	Intensive	Strategic	Benchmark
90-minute reading block	Native Language Development (<i>Trofeos, Estrellita</i>)		
English Literacy Block for 40/60 is the same as the FESL using District ELA programs			
Language of Instruction for Content Areas			
	60/40 Spanish Dominant		40/60 Transitional
70-minute math block	10 minutes instruction in English 60 minutes instruction in Spanish		45 minutes instruction in English 25 minutes instruction in Spanish

30-minute social studies period (3 days per 6-day cycle)	10 minutes instruction in English 20 minutes instruction in Spanish	20 minutes instruction in English 10 minutes instruction in Spanish
30-minute sciences period (3 days per 6-day cycle)	10 minutes instruction in English 20 minutes instruction in Spanish	20 minutes instruction in English 10 minutes instruction in Spanish
30-minute music period (once per 6-day cycle)	No language of instruction specified No strategies for ELD	No language of instruction specified No strategies for ELD
30-minute art period (once per 6-day cycle)	No language of instruction specified No strategies for ELD	No language of instruction specified No strategies for ELD
30-minute PE period (once per 6-day cycle)	No language of instruction specified No strategies for ELD	No language of instruction specified No strategies for ELD

- The district has a number of enrichment and extended-learning opportunities for ELLs. The Department of Multilingual Education supports several programs—many of them new—focused on ELLs and offered in selected schools and at specified times, including:
 - ✚ **Newcomer Centers.** This program is offered to ELL students who are new to the district or who have been identified as having interrupted formal education and are enrolled at high school level. Grover Cleveland and Lafayette High School offer this program, which provides intensive English instruction in self-contained classes using the Access Newcomer program. Afternoon classes focus on content instruction (math, science, and social studies). There does not appear to be a sheltered English component to this program.
 - ✚ **Saturday Academies.** Offered at School 30, this 18-week program provides morning classes from 9 to 12 noon of intensive English and acculturation to newcomer students in grades 6-12. Another strand focuses on long-term LEP students (i.e., students who have been in ELL programs for six or more years but have yet to achieve English proficiency). The Saturday Academies also include a bilingual education strand.
 - ✚ **Project Jumpstart.** At School 3 and Grover Cleveland High School, newcomer students are offered extended-learning opportunities in full-day instruction in a four-week summer program. In addition to traditional English-language development instruction the program offers language development through the arts and other enrichment activities.
 - ✚ **Extended Day Program.** The district offers extended-day instruction in Schools 3, 33, 45, and Lafayette High School focusing on intensive English instruction. A number of other schools already have extended day programs (6, 18, 19, 30, 76, 94).
- The team considered that K-8 International School (45) and the dual language immersion program (at Olmstead) exhibited *best practices*. These programs stood out to the team

during interviews with parents and teachers. Leadership of the schools was considered excellent.

- The district’s dual language programs are in high demand and are widely praised by parents. Buffalo City Public School 64, for instance, has a dual language program where there is a waiting list six times longer than the number of available slots (66 requests for 11 slots). The school also provides workshops to help monolingual non-Spanish-speaking parents with the Spanish homework of their children—a very well received activity.

Areas of Concern

- Recent dissemination of ELL program models is a positive development, but it has not yet resulted in faithful program implementation. Prior to the Department of Multilingual Education’s efforts to better define the ELL program models used throughout the district, many programs were not abiding by the 60/40 or 40/60 Spanish/English language allocations for instruction under the transitional bilingual education model. In some cases the instruction was delivered entirely in English or entirely in Spanish. The sheer number of ELL program models used in the district (two forms of transitional bilingual education, dual language, and three models of Freestanding ESL) makes monitoring fidelity a difficult task. The difficulty is compounded by a number of factors:
 - ✚ *ELL movement between bilingual education models is not tied to the English language proficiency of the students.* Some school staff members have reportedly moved ELLs into models based on grade level—not proficiency levels in English. Moreover, some schools were moving ELLs quickly into English, prior to completing second grade and without the appropriate English language proficiency documentation.
 - ✚ *Principals do not always understand second language acquisition* and how the programs are to be implemented. Only one principal interviewed by the team had received professional development on second language acquisition pedagogy and instructional models. Without such training, these principals are unable to effectively monitor the implementation of lesson plans or the 40/60 or 60/40 language allocation models.
 - ✚ *At each school building, non-instructional issues sometimes undermine support of and commitment to the faithful implementation of bilingual education programming.* In addition to the lack of understanding of the goals and underpinnings of bilingual education programs, racial and language politics sometimes undermine fidelity of program implementation. The beliefs and philosophies that school leaders hold about learning English may overtly affect implementation of bilingual programs. For example, one school leader stated that his/her school disagreed with the bilingual approach and was reluctant to implement it. Other staff alluded to community pressure to use one instructional model or another regardless of what is instructionally optimal. In some cases the team simply sensed disdain for ELL students.

- ✚ *Ensuring that ELLs receive the required and necessary ESL instruction is often a scheduling challenge.* The New York State requirements are clear about the minimum units of ESL an ELL should receive. At the elementary (K-8) level, all beginning and intermediate ELLs receive two units of free-standing ESL (1 Unit = 36 minutes) and advanced ELLs get one unit plus one unit of English language arts (ELA). At the secondary level (9-12) ELLs should receive three units of ESL if they are at the beginning level and two if they are at intermediate. Advanced level ELLs receive one unit of ESL and one of ELA. School building staff reported to the team that scheduling ESL services was extremely difficult given the district's prevalent use of "walk to" models of instructional delivery and necessary literacy and math blocks.
 - ✚ *Confusion remains about when native language is utilized to provide instruction and when it is not.* Some staff members indicated that native language was to be used during the 36-minute block if the student is in a bilingual model or a 30-minute block if the student is in the Freestanding ESL model. The tables in the instructional time schedule show that there is a supplemental period and a differentiated period under both bilingual and transitional models. But it is not clear in the documents why a 30-minute block is used in one case and a 36-minute block is used in another. In addition, teachers may not know which model an individual student is assigned to, so confusion is common. Finally, there is confusion over when and how to use native language support in ESL.
 - ✚ *Viability of the models in any school is dependent at least in part on the availability of ESL and bilingual teachers in that school to provide a program.*
- The current Language Allocation Policy (LAP) may not be providing sufficient English language development. The current guidelines establish a 60/40 or 40/60 English/Spanish ratio for bilingual education programs depending on the English proficiency level of students: Spanish-speaking ELLs scoring at the beginner and intermediate levels fall under the 60/40 LAP used in the Spanish-dominant bilingual education programs. ELL students at the advanced level fall under the 40/60 policy in which 60 percent of instruction is in English.⁹ Having only two levels seems limited and does not provide enough English instruction to ease the transition of more advanced ELLs into the English instructional program or help students at the lower ends.
 - The Department of Multilingual Education's guidance on the implementation of ELL programs is cumbersome and often emphasizes procedure and compliance over instruction. The ELL instructional improvement efforts that began in 2006 led to the release of an important set of memoranda to clarify, guide, and interpret ELL programmatic elements and policies, e.g., grading procedures for LEP students, the use of NYSESLAT review materials, and ESL-course descriptions and schedules. Unfortunately, there are also a number of other documents that address some of the same issues but in differing ways, and other documents are just as procedurally oriented:

⁹ August 22, 2007 Memorandum from the Director of Multilingual Education describes these criteria.

- ✚ The School Quality Reviews conducted in 2006-07 called for the development and issuance of clear guidelines to help schools implement bilingual education programs with fidelity. The reviews noted the inconsistent use of language of instruction and the minimal units of English Language development provided to ELLs.
- ✚ The piecemeal nature of the ELL program implementation guide does not lend itself to easy and straightforward use by school building leaders and teachers.
- ✚ The memo combines compliance-like requirements for schools with some general guidelines that in some cases leave substantial leeway for differing interpretations. For example, the January 20, 2009 memorandum on grading procedures for LEP students (K-8) states:

Seventh and eighth grade LEP/ELL students must meet the same requirements as all other 7th and 8th grade students in the Buffalo Public Schools. [...] LEP students in grades K-8 should not be retained beyond the district policy for promoting and retaining students. When deciding whether or not to promote LEP/ELL students, the following criteria should be considered:

- a) The number of years the student has been enrolled in a U.S. school
- b) Level of success in academic subject areas
- c) Academic ability in native language as well as English
- d) Academic growth as demonstrated by ongoing classroom assessments and/or portfolio or other alternative assessments.

The memorandum does not provide guidance on applying criteria in a way that would help teachers and school building leaders in making promotional determinations among ELLs.

- During its site visit, the team heard that many principals do not feel they have the knowledge to confidently help teachers interpret district policies and documents regarding the promotion of ELLs. The team was unaware whether policies and documents on promotion were accompanied by additional support or training for principals.
 - The lack of consistency in ELL program implementation across the district's schools results in interrupted services for ELLs.
- ✚ Staff reported that it was not atypical for an ELL to have attended five or more schools in the district, each with its own bilingual education or ESL program.
 - ✚ The program's implementation, the level of native language support, program rigor, and teacher quality appear to be contingent on the principal, according to staff interviewed. Any improvements in ELL programs are based on individual relationships forged between the Department of Multilingual Education and individual principals and school staff.

- ✚ The districtwide textbook adoptions provide a wide array of resources for ELLs, but nobody could confirm that any alignment analyses had been conducted on the variety of instructional materials used for ELLs. The team did not hear of any attempt to cross-check the various books used with ELLs with the general education programs.
- Gaps in ELL programs exist even within individual schools. For instance, the team heard that some K-6 schools might have a bilingual education program that only goes up to the fourth grade, producing gaps in late elementary and early secondary programming if the school is a K-8. The team did not have data to confirm what it heard on this issue, but the team urges the district to examine whether this gap actually exists and where.
- Changes in school leadership also contribute to inconsistent ELL programming. Schools with a stable history of programs for ELLs may shift the focus of programs when a new principal with a different approach arrives. The team heard about a situation where a school's program supported a transitional bilingual education approach with native language development, but a new principal had a different philosophy and removed the native language supports.
- Additional inconsistency arises because ELL programs rely heavily on individual teachers to carry them out. Sometimes when teachers change or leave, the program itself vanishes or becomes more inconsistent from one site to another. The team was told that students who speak less common languages such as Somali may end up with only a paraprofessional to help with translation during content-area instruction. Having an ESL and/or a bilingual education teacher in the school building is often equated to having an ELL program.
- The team saw little evidence of a systemic process based on sound research to guide a school's selection of ELL instructional models. Rather, the selection process appeared to be driven by philosophical or political considerations. The team heard little about how the pedagogical needs of particular ELLs were determined or how that information was used to decide which type of instructional model to use. The general lack of district knowledge about second language acquisition has resulted in a dearth of best practices and implicitly assigns ELL program decisions to publishers and their textbooks. And the Department of Multilingual Education's efforts to provide greater guidance through memoranda and sample instructional schedules have yet to take root.
- The ESL program heavily relies on pull-out services, resulting in a highly fragmented instructional day for ELLs. Pull-out instructional strategies for ELLs divide a student's day and result in ELLs' sacrificing content classes to receive ESL instruction that is not explicitly designed to scaffold the content that students are missing. ELLs who experience these fragmented services are further affected when their ESL teacher fills in as a substitute for teachers in a general education class. In addition, the pull-out strategy fails to build capacity in general education teachers.
- Finally, issues in scheduling ESL instructional services indicate a larger problem that may exclude qualified ELLs from having access to gifted and talented programs or to special education services.

E. Program Monitoring

This section describes the mechanisms in place to ensure that the instructional program for ELLs is being implemented as envisioned.

Positive Findings

- The district’s central office staff members are often seen in the schools to monitor programs. The district has instituted a number of procedural changes that allow central office supervisors to increase their presence in the schools to provide instructional leadership and supervision.
- The district has developed a walk-through rubric for ELL programming to monitor classroom instruction and has conducted a series of state quality reviews of selected schools with ELL programs to see how well those programs were being implemented.
- The district-developed “Classroom Assessment Tool” that was recently implemented has helped build consistency in the instructional program. The school district’s central office has teams that conduct walk-throughs using the Classroom Assessment Tool, and it helps the district monitor the fidelity of instructional program implementation. The results are aggregated up to the chief academic officer and used to monitor a number of components, including teaching effectiveness.
- District staff reported to the team that teacher accountability for program implementation has improved with the use of walk-throughs, and has improved tenure reviews.

Areas of Concern

Classroom Tools

- The Classroom Assessment Tool does not incorporate any elements of effective instruction for ELLs. The result is that the district’s main tool for monitoring practice does not include ELL programming components. ELLs are not taught exclusively in ESL or by bilingual education teachers. All general education teachers and administrators would benefit from knowing what to look for in effective classrooms where ELLs and other students with special needs are present. If there are concerns about the forms and procedures, they would be the following
 - ✚ The Classroom Assessment Tool does not incorporate any aspects of instructional strategies for ELLs, even in areas that probe for teachers’ delivery of instruction, their response to students, or how teachers elicit student participation.
 - ✚ The Classroom Assessment Tool does not identify areas where the quality of instruction in bilingual education classes needs work. The team was told by senior staff that the walk-throughs conducted in bilingual education classes indicated where teachers needed further training in teaching reading in both English and Spanish. However, the team’s review indicated that the document did not provide the

information that would inform needed professional development or instructional practice for ELLs.

- ✚ The six-page Classroom Assessment Tool focuses on implementation of adopted textbooks, instructional-management programming, and classroom management, but it places less emphasis on student engagement, instructional activities, state standards, or pacing. The team counted over 31 indicators/items related to classroom management or compliance with the managed-instructional program that the district requires. In contrast, five indicators were directly related to student engagement and/or instructional participation. Staff indicated that not much was done districtwide with the results of the Classroom Assessment Tool.
- The absence of ELL components in the Classroom Assessment Tool led to the development by the Department of Multilingual Education of a related document to assist teachers and administrators in understanding what ESL, bilingual education, and language-other-than-English (LOTE)¹⁰ instructional models should look like. The team’s review of the document raised a number of concerns:
 - ✚ The ELL walk-through document makes no mention of ESL standards, and there are no items on the document that probe for whether teachers are teaching to the standards. Only in reference to ESL and LOTE programs is there an item that probes for instruction—interactive lessons and explicit instruction of cultural components.
 - ✚ The section related to “Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Classrooms” emphasizes teachers’ cultural competencies but not sensitivity to linguistic competencies, such as knowledge of second-language acquisition, building on native language, and prior knowledge. In addition, the document does not look for instructional differentiation based on the language proficiency levels of the students.
 - ✚ The ELL document gathers information about textbook adoptions, managed instruction, and compliance with district policies and guidelines specific to the ELL instructional models being used. No information is gathered on student engagement.
- The Department of Multilingual Education’s “walk-through” document compliments the classroom assessment document used with the general education program. And having two documents is not unusual in large school districts, but they sometimes result in greater instructional incongruity. Finally, neither document addresses differentiated instruction nor helps build capacity among teachers to provide it.

Observations from Classroom Visits

The following are some of the team’s major observations arising from its school and ELL classroom visits. We do not, however, provide findings about individual schools

¹⁰ The state Web site describes LOTE as languages taught in foreign-language courses—Languages other than English.

- There was no consistency from classroom to classroom in how ELLs were being taught, even involving the same content.
- The proficiency-level groupings in the classrooms appeared irregularly defined and not consistent with the levels themselves.
- The level of instruction in most classrooms was extremely low. Students were disengaged, and instruction often involved little more than worksheet exercises, copying questions off the board or out of textbooks. For instance, the Council team saw a lesson on probability that simply involved having students copy and color in a pie chart from the blackboard.
- Many dual language classes the team visited exhibited excellent teaching with active student engagement.
- The newcomer program was located in a dank basement area of its high school, but the team saw a very dedicated teacher working with a large class of quite varied students.
- Very little differentiated instruction was going on in general classrooms that had ELLs in them.
- Some principals seemed very unfamiliar with their bilingual/ESL programs or the instructional approaches behind them. Principals with bilingual programs seemed better versed.
- The team saw one school where the ELL program assumed that students were to become fluent in their native language phonics and phonemic awareness skills before transitioning into the same skills in English.

F. Program and Student Placement

This section presents the team's findings and observations about the Buffalo school district's program and student placement processes and patterns related to English language learners. The team also looked at current student placements and registration procedures.

Positive Findings

- New York State provides clear guidelines for identifying English language learners, tracking their ongoing progress, and exiting them from ELL programs. The district staff from the Department of Multilingual Education and the Language Assessment Center seemed well versed in the process and criteria for ELL identification, placement, and exiting.
- The student registration and sign-up process has improved in recent years. During the team's interviews, parents gave good reviews to the district's centralized student placement and sign-up processes at the convention center.

Areas of Concern

Program Configuration and Placement

- There appears to be no discernable plan or strategy for determining the placement of programs across the district. Staff members indicated that the district does not engage in any ongoing planning about where to locate ELL programs in response to demographic shifts (something the district does not project) or school strengths or needs. Instead, the placement of ELL programs appears largely to be historically determined to a large degree. In addition, staff members that were interviewed did not have a clear idea of whether ELL students were considered when decisions were being made about closing a school that might house ELL programs.¹¹

The lack of transparency in the placement and the movement of ELL programs among schools appear to generate mistrust in the community and confusion among parents. For example, the team heard from staff and the community alike that there was a sense that Hispanics are favored and receive greater instructional support through the ELL programs. But the team saw no evidence that the district is making distinctions in the levels of services provided based on language groups. There appeared to be a number of other factors at work, including the following:

- ✚ The New York School Quality Reviews indicated that some ELLs who speak one of the lesser-spoken languages were not receiving services and that instructional materials in languages other than English were not always available. Staff indicated that it was extremely difficult to find and recruit qualified teachers in less commonly spoken languages.
 - ✚ Since about 50 percent of the district’s ELLs speak Spanish—and given the 20-student threshold in New York State law—the result is that a greater number of bilingual education programs are required and implemented for Spanish-speaking ELLs.¹²
 - ✚ Native-language support appears to be determined not by the district but rather by New York State law. There is no legal barrier to the district’s providing some native language support for languages other than Spanish. The district could develop centrally supported native-language assistance to enhance instruction through ESL for non-Spanish-speaking ELLs whose numbers are small.
- The district does not have a strategic process by which ELL students are grouped to maximize instructional and teaching resources. Teachers repeatedly pointed out the challenge of having highly mixed groupings of ELLs in the same classes where students speak different languages and have differing levels of English proficiency. Moreover, mixed classes also include students with interrupted formal education (SIFE).

¹¹ The team was told that some school closing decisions, for example, don’t consider the impact on ELLs. For example, the ELL program was allowed to become quite small in a school that was being converted to a College Board school and students (including ELLs) were not allowed to enroll.

¹² In 2005-06 and 2006-07, Spanish-speaking ELLs made up 60 percent of total ELL enrollment.

- ✚ The team noted that there were limited opportunities for mixing ELLs and English-proficient students in the same schools. The Newcomer Center at the high school was an example where ELLs were physically isolated in the basement despite being in the same building with their English-speaking peers.
- ✚ The team heard that bilingual and ESL programs were placed in schools located in the more economically distressed areas of the city, while the dual-language immersion program was placed in a middle class neighborhood. ELLs who attended dual-language schools were bused to the Frederick Olmstead School. The team, however, did see evidence of the isolated placement of newcomers in Lafayette High School.
- There is no protocol in place for deciding on and providing translation or interpretation services in schools. There are no centrally supported services providing translation and other functions affecting ELLs who speak low-incidence languages. The result is that these students often receive insufficient support.
- The lack of transparency and consistency in the process used to determine where bilingual education programs are placed creates confusion among parents and undermines confidence in the district. The decisions are not made based on a written long-range plan that is publicly accessible. Instead, decisions appear to be made by staff on the basis of a number of factors—teacher vacancies, enrollment choices, and enrollment trends. The lack of transparency had led some individuals in the community to believe that ELLs are being distributed among the schools to minimize their impact on schools’ AYP status. Further, some interviewees indicated that they believed that the district was allowing schools to avoid sanctions by letting their school populations to fall below 30, to and avoid having to implement bilingual education programs by letting populations fall below 20. The team was unable to confirm this assertion, but data do indicate that large numbers of schools enroll fewer than 20 ELLs—a pattern that may simply be accidental and due to where families move.
- The presence of small numbers of ELLs in some schools appears to have led to a proliferation of small programs that the central office cannot adequately support. The team reviewed the four-year cohort data on ELLs to ascertain how many schools had ELLs. The data, however, were inconsistent from source to source.

A cursory look at ELL placements suggests that the district has been placing or serving small numbers of ELLs (three-year average of 200) in 30 to 40 programs in schools with ELL enrollments of between 1 and 20 students. Moreover, over 20 of these programs/schools had fewer than five ELLs. This wide dispersal of ELLs across schools and programs creates inordinate demands on central-office staff to support a large number of schools with small numbers of students. Moreover, the low enrollment numbers create ELL programming difficulties such as proficiency-level groupings and language groupings. Finally, the low ELL enrollment across a large number of programs or schools exacerbates the district’s challenge in hiring qualified ESL and bilingual education teachers and staff.

- Conversely, concentrating large numbers of ELLs in some schools could exacerbate the problem of isolation. Between 2007-08 and 2008-09, the percentage of ELLs that attend schools that having between 100 and 400 ELL students increased by about 10 percent. The percentage of ELLs enrolled in schools with 21 to 100 ELLs declined by 20 percent. The team heard of no projections or placement-planning efforts that would suggest reasons for these trends. To be sure, ELL programming can be better supported when ELL enrollments reach a critical mass in terms of grade level, language, and English proficiency. But, the concentrations of ELL may be increasing to a point where there is greater isolation.
- The flaws in the placement of ELLs may be leaving some eligible students without appropriate service. When the team made its site visit, district staff ran updated reports on ELL enrollments across the district that showed 16 schools where there were 6 or fewer ELLs with no service, including ESL, for any of the students. The district does not have scheduled data downloads that would have identified this gap in services. Instead, downloads for these purposes are done on an *ad hoc* basis. The download done for the Council team indicated nearly 100 English language learners in the district had not received bilingual or ESL services at all during most of the 2008-09 school year. In a case like this, it is difficult to rectify the problem with ESL certified teachers because of the dispersion of students.

Some of this lack of service might have been the result of parental refusal to participate in bilingual education services, but New York State law does not allow parents to refuse ESL services if their child is identified as ELL. The district is now exploring how it might provide support to these ELLs with spring-break and summer programs.

Student Placement

- The student placement process for ELLs—and others—is complicated by the district’s school choice system and by SURR schools (that enroll sizable numbers of ELLs). Interviewees indicated that parents were informed that the goal of the district’s ELL program was to help students learn English as quickly as possible, so parents who wanted their children to maintain their native language should not choose transitional models of bilingual education. Often, parents are not provided enough information about the programs at each school to make an informed choice about them. Consequently, parents are forced to visit each school, which is not feasible. Finally, there is no guarantee that spaces are available because slots depend on classroom slots, the class size cap, and the availability of staff at any given school. If a school loses its bilingual teacher, it could easily lose its program.
- The registration process for ELL families requires additional steps that other families do not have to take. First, ELL families go to the Language Assessment Center (LAC) to fill out their home-language survey and participate in language-proficiency testing for placement. Second, ELL families go to the placement office in the same building to fill out their school choice application.

- The district has one day on which new students (pre-k and kindergarten) register for school—June 6 at the convention center. (Registration can occur year-round but choices are limited.) This is a third step for ELL families. Parents expressed frustration at having a single day at the beginning of the school year to register, and indicated that the one day resulted in long lines and added to the chaotic nature of the experience. And parents—ELL and non-ELL alike—expressed uncertainty about the results of the placement process. Even savvy parents seemed worn down by the uncertain school-selection process and the one-day-only registration process.
- Parents interviewed by the team said they understood that the quality of schools, programs, and instruction was quite different from school to school. Parents also indicated that they knew their perceptions were not necessarily well founded, but that they “school-shopped” anyway. Choices were often shaped by how well they (the parents) were received at the schools they visited.
- ✚ Parents—even parents who were Internet and computer savvy—reported that the district Web page for recording school choices was not user-friendly. Parents can select up to six schools, but there is no way to compare schools on the Web page. A cursory navigation effort by the team confirmed the lack of accessibility to key information, such as the school-choice process and a list of schools by type: magnet, “examination,” charter schools. There was no link in Spanish or other languages. Only the Department of Multilingual Education had links available in Spanish but the information was limited to ELL-related programs and not overall district operations and processes.
- ✚ The school-selection process seems inaccessible to ELL families without language help. The Web site did not contain any information for parents on the differing bilingual and ESL options. (See parent section.)
- ✚ The team was told that the district has not made a decision about placing staff from the district’s refugee center at the registration center to help place ELL students.
- Each school in the district sets its own dates by which it notifies parents—including ELL parents—that their child has been accepted into one of the choice schools or programs. Sometimes these dates are so late that parents reported they gave up and enrolled their children in private or parochial schools because they didn’t know if their children would get into their preferred public school or program. The private schools set their dates individually as well, but are clearly cognizant of the district dates and may set earlier ones in order to attract students away from district schools. Other parents reported that the lack of sibling preferences in the district caused unnecessary complications for parents with multiple children in the district.
- The district’s school choice plan results in restricted options for ELLs because high school exam schools—Hutch Tech and City Honors—appear not to make special testing accommodations for ELLs. The entrance exam to these schools is strictly an academic screening test in English. According to Buffalo's Part 154 ELL Data Report to the state, a total of 309 ELLs were enrolled in grades 9-12 during the 2007-08 school year. These

students were in 10 of 13 high schools in the district, but over three quarters of these students attended a single high school, and four high schools accounted for 93 percent of ELL enrollment.

- ✚ Six high schools had ELL enrollments of six or less (representing 7 percent of all ELLs in high school).
- ✚ Three high schools had enrollments between six and 20 ELLs (representing 17 percent of all ELLs in high school).
- ✚ One high school enrolled 251 ELLs, representing 76 percent of all high school ELLs.
- Interviewees reported that some school administrators show reluctance to enroll ELLs for fear of dampening scores, so choices may be in the hands of principals as much as parents. In addition, if parents are making their choices based in part on how well they are received, then schools may select out some parents by how they treat them when they visit.
- The placement process into bilingual education and ESL programs is not straightforward for parents. The identification-processing center ensures ELLs are appropriately assessed for identification and parents are provided information about the programs available to their child. Families fill out the Home Language Survey and, based on this information, ELL assessments and placements are recommended (but not made) according to state law (Part 117 of State Regulations). Staff indicated that this assessment also includes the identification of ELLs for gifted and talented and special education services.
- The district does not have good data on why some parents refuse bilingual education services. Nor were there data on how students who refused services performed relative to those who accepted it. Some staff and community members indicated that some parents may be opting out of bilingual education because they do not understand the academic needs of the children or the type of services offered. Without clear data, however, these explanations are little more than speculation.
- District staff indicated that a number of students return to Puerto Rico for extended stays, and often return to a different school with differing language services. But the district does not have data on the magnitude of the phenomenon.

Exit Criteria

- The criteria for exiting ELL status rests solely on the state-determined, single criterion—NYSESLAT scores—something that the Buffalo schools cannot unilaterally change. Yet, the district has not adopted interim assessments that would help predict how ELLs will perform on the NYSESLAT. Moreover, relying solely on NYSESLAT scores complicates the LEP and former LEP placement process because scores are reported in the summer, too late to make determinations for the next school year.

Newcomer Services

- Instructional services for newcomer students are inadequate in terms of both staffing levels and facilities. The Council team visited the newcomer program in the basement of Lafayette High School and found it woefully inadequate. The teachers working in the setting were doing an excellent job, but they were doing so in facilities that were cramped, poorly equipped, and isolated from the general school environment. One teacher’s class exceeded 30 students. It was clear, however, that students were engaged and eager to learn.
- ✚ The newcomer program is essentially a one-year course and is highly structured with three periods of English, one period of math, and one period of science. Students receive no credit for their math and science courses, however. Students were placed in programs by chronological age rather than academic or language proficiency.
- ✚ Newcomer students who are unable to attend the newcomer program due to space constraints are sent to other schools without specialized services. The team was told that there is a waiting list for the welcome center. Schools that receive excess newcomer students may not be staffed to provide students with appropriate services. For example, SIFE from Burma were placed in a school that had Spanish ESL-support teachers but no one proficient in Burmese. The district did not shift staff from other schools or provide professional development to current staff to address the needs of these students.
- ✚ The team saw instances where classes of 30 or more students were broken into two classes, but then allowed to grow into separate classes of 30 or more students with no additional action.
- The district-adopted program—*Access Newcomer* (Great Source)—may not provide sufficient support and acceleration to meet the needs of high-school age newcomers. The program indicates that it focuses on 2,160 high-frequency words, but that is far lower than the number that research indicates is needed to have adequate reading comprehension at that age level. Adequate reading comprehension depends on knowing between 90 and 95 percent of the words in the text. Among native speakers of English, research indicates that an average eighth grader has a reading vocabulary of 25,000 word families.¹³ The *Access Newcomer* program has a ninth grader focusing on about 2,000 words (not word families) per year for a total of 8,000 over four years. This rate would place an ELL far behind the 50,000 word-family vocabulary of an average twelfth grade native-English speaker.

¹³ Debra J. Short, *Developing Academic Literacy in Adolescent English Language Learners*. Retrieved March 21, 2010: <http://www.pdfqueen.com/html/aHR0cDovL3d3dy5oYmVkZ2UubmV0L3Byb2ZkZXVvZ3VpZGVzL0VhZ2VfVEVfQU01X2Z3by5wZGY=>. Word family is a basic word and all of its other forms and meanings (e.g., the word family for “run” would include run, ran, running, runner, run into, run on, run over, etc.)

Special Education Placements

- District data indicate that ELLs are over-represented in special education programs. Of the 3,000 ELLs in district schools, approximately 20 percent are connected to special education. Most are identified as having a Speech Impairment (SI) or a Learning Disability (LD). (See Exhibit 4.)
- The team was told that the district delivers speech service as a special-education service in order to obtain Medicaid reimbursements. This practice may be pushing up ELL speech-impairment placement numbers. Staff indicated that the district would like to deliver speech services outside of the Individualized Education Program (IEP).
- Teachers needed more training to better distinguish between second language acquisition needs and special education needs. There was a sense among staff that there was confusion about the categories, which was resulting in many teachers referring ELLs for special education evaluations.
- Senior staff members estimated that about 25 percent of ELLs had full IEPs, but no one was certain about the rate. Efforts were being made to get a better understanding of initial referrals, and the Department of Multilingual Education was assisting with this effort. District staff indicated that 56 percent of referrals came from outside the schools by advocates seeking more services (e.g., Somali refugee students).
- The district's pre-referral process does not yet have formal indicators related to ELLs, but efforts are underway to mitigate the high number of referrals through a pre-referral process that records the interventions a child receives and evaluates the impact of these differing interventions. If after participating in the instructional interventions, a student shows no progress or actually declines then the student is assessed as needing special education services. At the time of the team's visit, staff members were engaged in developing indicators for the placement of ELLs, including samples of the students' work in their native language, to determine how ELLs were responding to interventions. The team was concerned, however, that the interventions themselves may be inappropriate for ELLs, and student's failure to respond to them may have more to do with the nature of the interventions than the appropriateness of a special education placement. And the team was concerned that mental health problems related to possible trauma from immigrating from a war-torn country, for instance, might be mistaken for a disability or that a disability might be masking prior trauma.
- The district's special education department may not be able to sort out all of the intersecting ELL/special education issues without greater collaboration between the departments responsible for these students.
 - ✚ The team was told that some inter-departmental collaboration was taking place but that it was more relational than systemic.

- ✚ The team did not gather enough information from the special education unit to determine its capacity on second-language acquisition issues, but the group was concerned about the issue.
- ✚ The special education department has some school psychologists with bilingual extensions to their school psychology certificate. But we were unable to determine how many had a supplemental certificate and how many had a full certificate from an accredited and registered college. According to the New York State Education Department, this extension is supplementary when the school psychologist completes a registered college bilingual extension program. The supplemental extension related to ELLs requires: a) “three semester hours of prerequisite coursework, which must include theories of bilingual education and multicultural perspectives” (NY Board of Regents-approved amendments to the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education); b) documentation of proficiency in the target language; c) matriculation in a collegiate-registered bilingual-extension program for nine additional hours within a three-year period for the full extension. The team was not clear that an initial three-semester-hour requirement for the supplemental extension provided adequate knowledge for accurate identification and interventions for ELLs with special needs.
- The district did not appear to have tracking information on how long ELL students remained in special education and what the exit criteria were for this group.
- Scheduling difficulties may be prompting ELLs and special education students to be placed together in self-contained classes regardless of needs. Staff indicated that scheduling ESL instruction was a challenge for the district given how Direct Instruction and other interventions were used in schools.

High School Completion

- ELLs in Buffalo have less than half the graduation rate of ELLs in New York State: 21 percent versus 55 percent. No doubt these figures are affected by a large number of ELLs entering the secondary grades in Buffalo with no prior English language instruction or no prior formal education, but they do not fully explain the substantial differences in rates.
- Senior staff reported that weak communications between high school counselors and ELLs and poor professional development on college opportunities exacerbate the low high school graduation rates among ELLs. The team also heard from parents and community groups that ELLs had little access to timely and accurate counseling services.
- The district appears to have no pathway toward graduation for ELLs who enter the system in ninth grade or afterwards.

In general, a number of factors make the instruction of ELLs in secondary grades more difficult for many schools than anticipated. The secondary grades require greater language complexity in the content areas, and students are expected to exhibit it. Yet teachers at the secondary level often do not see themselves as “literacy” teachers *per se*. It is also a challenge to find qualified secondary-school-level bilingual education or ESL

teachers. Finally, the schools often face scheduling problems in scheduling ELLs for ESL services and support.

Long-term English Language Learners

- District staff members were able to identify 655 long-term ELLs who have been in a district ELL program for more than five years. Upwards of 50 percent also had learning disabilities, but the team did not hear about any collaborative effort between the special education and multilingual education departments to jointly address the needs of this group of long-term ELLs.
- The team reviewed the district's Long-Term-ELL Plans for 2008-09 and 2009-2010 and found that they are too narrowly focused on improving NYSESLAT scores. The 2009-2010 plan involves providing an additional program (RIGOR) for these students, as well as a Saturday Academy. The 2009-2010 plan was more explicit about ESL and ELA instruction than the previous year's plan, and includes participation in the AIS.
- Staff indicated that they were not sure how to address the needs of long-term ELLs.

G. Data and Assessments

The team looked at the instruments used to assess English language learners and the data systems that the school district uses to make instructional decisions about English language learners at both the district and the school levels. The team also looked at the data systems to understand their capacity to support a convincing accountability system. Finally, the team looked at the assessment instruments and data systems to see how well they could support program evaluation, implementation, and improvement.

Positive Findings

- The district's leadership, which understands the importance of data and how data can be used to improve instruction, has strengthened its databases and has made inroads into solidifying data-driven decision making in the schools. The team learned that the district is working on migrating all of its data to a single databank. In addition, through its Leadership Academies, the district has been providing principals and administrators with relevant professional development on data analysis and data use. Finally, the central office deploys its staff to schools to assist in data use and analysis. As a result, district staff reported that there has been an increase in the number of data requests, and more educators and administrative leaders such as community superintendents are making reference to data for decision making.
- The district makes extensive use of DIBELS for monitoring progress. For ELLs receiving instruction in Spanish through bilingual programs, IDEL—the Spanish version of DIBELS—is administered. The team reviewed school improvement plans that show that DIBELS is used to monitor instructional interventions with the expectation that student scores on the state ELA assessment will improve.

- The school district has strong and knowledgeable central office staff working on data and data systems. The Office of Shared Accountability in the central office has a designated liaison for ELL programs who is able to access data and respond to data requests on ELL students. The Office of Shared Accountability seemed well poised to respond to many data requests. The relatively new director, who had been on board for about a year when the team met with staff, had begun to produce school-by-school achievement data disaggregated by ELL and free and reduced price lunch status. The team also learned that ELL student records were tagged in such a way that their progress could be tracked throughout their schooling. This ELL identification has allowed staff to disaggregate some results on request and give the district data on ELL progress in the same way that it can give it on general education students.
- The district is able to longitudinally track the achievement of ELLs. While the district has a short history of such tracking, the team was told that data show that for three years former LEP students have been outperforming general education students. The team saw graphs formulated on this data, but did not conduct any further analysis of the data on former LEP students because so much of the focus of the team's work was on current ELLs.
- The Department of Multilingual Education has staff members who understand and are capable of using data to monitor the academic progress of ELLs. The team saw evidence that the central office ELL program staff were making efforts to push data-driven decisions about ELL instruction into the schools. In preparation for the 2007-08 school year, for example, the department sent a memo to all ESL teachers reminding them about the various datasets that were available to better determine the instructional needs of ELLs. The memo also noted that schools were expected to administer assessments from the three ESL textbook series (*Moving Into English*, *High Point* and *Visions*) for department review.
- New York State translates its exams into up to six languages depending on the exam. Because the languages translated by the state do not always correspond to Buffalo's predominate languages, the district has dedicated its own funds to translating exams that the state hasn't. In addition, the district has a contract to provide oral interpretations for several languages. Staff members indicated that exams were translated into four languages.
- The district has substantially increased the number of ELL students participating in the state assessment and accountability system. (Exhibit 20) For instance, in 2006-07, 89 percent more ELLs were tested on the state's ELA exam than in 2005-06. An additional 6 percent were assessed in 2007-08—a net increase across the three years of 101 percent. The number of ELLs assessed in math dipped in 2006-07, the three-year period saw a 6-percent increase. The numbers of ELLs assessed in science and social studies decreased substantially between 2005-06 and 2006-07, but increased significantly the next year for a net three-year gain. (The team could find no explanation for this swing.) Between 2005-06 and 2007-08, total enrollment of ELLs in the district rose by about 5 percent.

Exhibit 20. Increase in Numbers of ELLs Tested from 2005-06 to 2007-08

	2005-06	2006-07		2007-08		
	ELLs Tested	ELLs Tested	% Increase over 05-06	ELLs Tested	% Increase over 07-08	% Increase over 05-06
ELA	587	1,111	89%	1,178	6%	101%
Math	1,377	1,344	-2%	1,453	8%	6%
Science	477	364	-24%	488	34%	2%
Social Studies	417	366	-12%	479	31%	15%

Source: Office of Shared Accountability, 4/29/2009 3-Yr NYS

- Efforts are underway by the district to begin evaluating programs and initiatives related to ELLs. Staff interviewed by the team indicated that several evaluation projects are underway. One partnership with a local university is evaluating the impact of extended learning programs, and the ELL office is considering evaluating various ELL initiatives supported under the Contract for Excellence.

Areas of Concern

- The team saw little evidence that the school board receives regular reports on the academic status or progress of ELL or the programs that are designed to serve them. There was also not much evidence to suggest that the board asked for these data or requested updates about how programs for ELLs were working.
- The team heard that data were being disaggregated by language proficiency but did not see much evidence that these disaggregations were being regularly included in district reports. The team also learned that there were no regularly scheduled reports on how the programs serving ELLs were functioning.
- In 2007-08 a total of 10 schools that serve ELLs were on the state's SURR list. These schools collectively served 1,182 ELLs or 44 percent of all ELLs enrolled in the Buffalo Public Schools. (See Exhibit 21.) In 2008-09, Buffalo succeeded in removing several schools from the SURR list, although seven schools that serve ELLs remained on the list. These schools served 932 ELLs or 33 percent of the district's total ELL enrollment.
- Even in schools in the superintendent's special district (SURR schools) that are receiving additional scrutiny and support, performance data are not always disaggregated on ELLs even though many of these schools have bilingual education or ESL programs and sizable numbers of ELLs.

Exhibit 21. Estimated Number of ELLs Enrolled in Buffalo Schools on the New York State SURR List for School Years 2007-08 and 2008-09

	# of ELLs	Year	SURR Schools	
		Identified	2007-08	2008-09
Buffalo Elementary School Of Technology*	93	2006	x	x
PS 11 Poplar Street Academy		2007	x	x
PS 18 Dr. Antonia Pantoja*	161	2002	x	
PS 19 Native American Magnet*	81	2003	x	
PS 37 Futures Academy		2004	x	x
Mayor Frank A. Sedita CS*	306	2001	x	x
P.S. 53 Community Schools		2001	x	
PS 61 EC Center		2005	x	
PS 74 Hamlin Park Elementary School		2006	x	
PS 76 – Herman Badillo*	240	2005	x	x
Burgard High School *	12	2001	x	x
Grover Cleveland High School*	200	2003	x	x
South Park H.S.*	20	2002	x	x
West Hertel Elementary School*	61	2005	x	x
Grabiarz School Of Excellence*	8	2006	x	
Harvey Austin School		2005	x	x
Total ELLs enrolled in SURR Schools	1,182		1,182	932
% total ELL enrollment (prior year of accountability status)			44%	33%

*Note: Schools that appear on the district's list of schools serving ELLs (Source: Department of Multilingual Education)

- The district has limited data on which to make comparisons between the models of ELL programs being used school by school. The district's data collection and analysis on ELLs is getting better, but it is still not capable of being used to analyze results by program type and participation. So at the moment, the district is unable to tell which programs are working best and which ones are not working at all. Also, it is very difficult to determine basic program and model participation rates by school and how long it takes each model to move ELLs through the programs. Also, the team did not see data on (1) parent preference among models, (2) ELL achievement among students whose parents had opted out of bilingual programming, (3) students who had not received any services, or (4) length of time in program. However, the team did see data that suggested that ELLs

who are in an ESL model were performing better on the NYSESLAT than ELLs served by the bilingual education model. But that could be because ESL students may be more likely to have had exposure to English earlier.

- The district's data tracking the numbers of students who had been in an ELL program by year were not readily available.
- The absence of good data on the school-by-school ELL programs has fed the word-of-mouth notions in the community about which schools are good and which ones are not.
- The Language Assessment Center (LAC) and the Office of Shared Accountability appear to have differing figures on the numbers of ELLs enrolled and tested. For example, the for 2007-09, LAC data show that about 32 percent of students tested were recommended for placement in bilingual programs; the Office of Shared Accountability's enrollment data shows 41 percent. For the 2008-09 school year, the LAC figures show 54 percent of students tested were recommended for bilingual programs while only 39 percent were enrolled. Some of these discrepancies may emerge from the differing data sets, but some probably emerge from a lack of clarity among staff about the placement and counting of students or placements that don't follow the recommendations. (See subsequent student-placement section.)
- ELL students are often required to take both DIBELS and IDEL (administered only to Spanish-speaking ELLs). Teachers often complained about the amount of time required to do both. The team also questioned whether it was necessary to give both, since the data generated by the twin administrations did not appear to be used in a meaningful way to inform instruction or to monitor progress. In addition, although there is a correlation between fluency and comprehension, these assessments do not yield data on comprehension and are not designed to do so.
- The district has a considerable amount of DIBELS and IDEL data, but the results don't yield data on ELL academic status broadly because the IDEL is administered to only certain kinds of students (Spanish-speaking ELLs). The team saw little evidence that scores on both assessments were being correlated or used in a helpful way. Principals with large numbers of ELLs in their buildings did not appear to ask for both kinds of data and usually did not request customized reports.
- The DIBELS assessments used to determine literacy skill levels (intensive, strategic, and benchmark) for all students are designed for English-speaking students. But they are given to the approximately 50 percent of district ELLs who are not Spanish-speakers. The DIBELS may indicate that an ELL has low levels of literacy skills when, in fact, the assessment simply is unable to detect whether the student has these skills in a language other than English. Without careful analysis, the staff readings of assessment results may be equating the "lack of English" to low reading skills and prompting placements in lower-level phonics-related remedial programs.
- The results from these DIBELS assessments are used to place students into skill-level groupings with specified interventions. For ELLs, these remedial placements may be

limiting their opportunities to apply and acquire the more complex language that they need to boost comprehension skills. ELLs who remain in the intensive-level grouping for the entire 90-minute literacy block are less likely to be taught to standards for their grade level.

- District staff members outside the Department of Multilingual Education appear to have a limited understanding of the various assessments that are used for ELL identification, progress monitoring, and program exiting. Interviewees reported frustration with the lack of alignment between the LAB-R and the NYSESLAT, but a review of state documents indicated that these instruments have distinct purposes and the concern over alignment may be more appropriately directed toward the alignment between the NYSESLAT and the district's interim assessments.
 - ✚ In accordance with New York State regulations, the Buffalo School District uses the Language Assessment Battery-Revised (LAB-R) as the instrument to assess English language learners and place them in ELL programs when they first enter the school district. The LAB-R is administered for purposes of identification, determination of English proficiency levels, and placement in English-as-a-second-language and English language arts classes.¹⁴ Cut scores are determined by the State Education Department to identify students who are limited English proficient (LEP) and eligible for bilingual/ESL programs.
 - ✚ The New York State Department of Education also uses LAB-R cut scores to determine the required units of study in ESL and ELA for each grade level, based on English proficiency levels.
 - ✚ New York State requires annual progress monitoring with the NYSELAT, which is the state English language proficiency test administered each spring.
 - ✚ The New York State Department of Education requires that the NYSESLAT be used as the sole exit criteria from bilingual/ESL services and programs.
- The district gives a considerable number of assessments of ELL achievement, but the results do not always present a coherent picture of how students are doing academically. As noted in CR Part 154 Comprehensive Plan, the Buffalo Public Schools provide teachers with a "comprehensive view of the language and literacy achievement of their students" by way of an evaluation package of at least five assessment elements:¹⁵
 - ✚ LAB-R (for initial LEP identification and placement)
 - ✚ NYSESLAT (annual measure of progress on state English proficiency assessment)
 - ✚ English Language Arts state assessment results

¹⁴ The State Education Department/The University of the State of New York. LAB-R Cut Scores Memorandum 9/8/2005.

¹⁵ CR PART 154 Comprehensive Plan 2007-08.

✚ DIBELS (and IDEL)

- ✚ Program assessments: publisher-produced assessments from the six or so programs used for providing instruction to ELLs.

The multiple assessments yield a considerable amount of data, but the Department of Multilingual Education and the Office of Shared Responsibility have not been able to synthesize the results in a way that would present a coherent report of how ELLs are achieving in the district, where they are strong, and where they are weak. Moreover, the data as a whole do not appear to be used to understand what is working with ELLs and what is not. Furthermore, it is not clear how each assessment is aligned with the others so that the various district departments can create a full picture of ELL achievement. Finally, these multiple assessment systems present an enormous challenge to the district, principals, and teachers on how to interpret the results and provide professional development on how to understand, interpret, and use them for instructional purposes. Another challenge is for the data warehouse to capture and format the results in a user-friendly way.

- Most interim assessments the district uses for ELLs are not clearly aligned to state standards. The district does not have interim assessments to measure ELL progress *per se*, but very few school districts do. The district does use publisher-produced assessments incorporated in various purchased texts and interventions. The team saw no evidence that these packaged interim assessments had been checked for alignment with the state ELA assessments or with the NYSESLAT.
- District staff could not specify data that identified detailed skill deficits among ELLs. While many conversations about data occur in the district, staff often could not account for why scores showed increases or decreases in specific schools or specified groups of students. In addition, staff often did not know which specific skills students did well and which they did not. It was not clear that data were being analyzed at the district level in a way that could better inform staff, particularly school-based staff.

Staff indicated that data-driven decision making to guide instruction varied by school, including schools that are part of the superintendent's special district. The School Quality Reviews conducted in 2006-07 indicated the availability and use of data was a continuing challenge.

- The Department of Multilingual Education's efforts to remind ESL teachers of available datasets appear to fall short of what is needed at the school sites for staff to understand and use them. There are several possible reasons for this:
 - ✚ The memo on the use of data is basically an invitation to have teams of teachers and administrators look at NYSESLAT data, DIBELS assessments, and results from textbook assessments, as well as particular characteristics of ELLs (such as newcomers).
 - ✚ The memorandum is addressed to ESL teachers with copies to the school principal, but is not circulated to general education staff. The distribution of the memos

provides further evidence that principals and general education staff are not always seen as responsible for ELLs—ESL teachers are seen as primarily responsible for carrying out district policies on ELLs; principals appear secondary.

- ✚ Finally, the leeway ESL teachers and schools are given regarding what data are analyzed and how they are used undoubtedly results in any number of variations across schools. There is no process set up to identify best practices among these variations.

The disparate use of data makes it harder for the central office to provide timely and useful support, technical assistance, and professional development to the schools.

- Data from the Home Language Survey is housed in the student placement office, not in the Department of Multilingual Education, but is entered into the student information system. Student profiles on each ELL are provided to schools.
- District practices on the circulation and use of NYSESLAT data may undercut its effectiveness and utility. Part of the district’s strategy to increase teacher understanding of second language acquisition is to make the NYSLAT scores widely available, but the results are sent only to ESL teachers, who are asked to share it with other classroom teachers. (Copies are sent to principals with disaggregated results in each of the four language modalities.) This approach raised a number of concerns.
 - ✚ Staff interviewed did not know if this method of transmitting English proficiency information yielded the intended results.
 - ✚ Conversations with both principals and teachers did not suggest that NYSESLAT data were necessarily reviewed on a timely basis.
 - ✚ The Department of Multilingual Education provides some guidance to ESL teachers and schools *via* memoranda—such as the March 9, 2009 memo—on the use of NYSESLAT data and materials, but the team concluded:
 - a. There was insufficient support from the central office or academic coaches on how to strategically use the NYSESLAT data. For instance, the memo instructs ESL teachers to focus on the language modalities on which ELLs have not scored advanced or proficient (typically, reading and writing).
 - b. There was limited direction to principals. The memo was addressed mostly to ESL teachers with a copy to the principals, but there was little to no guidance for the school leaders on how to use the data or how to work with the teachers on what the data were saying.
 - ✚ Finally, the district receives the NYSESLAT report late in the summer, which provides little time for principals and teachers to carefully use the results to organize instructional services or modify teaching.

- Monitoring of English language development throughout the school year is not linked to performance on the NYSESLAT. The district administers the interim textbook-imbedded assessments three times a year, but even if ELLs perform well on these assessments there is no clear expectation that they will perform well on the state assessment of English proficiency. In fact, there is little way for teachers to tell from the interim assessments how well ELLs are likely to do on the NYSESLAT.
- The district uses its academic coaches to meet with teachers at every grade level to go over district data and how students are doing, but the coaches receive very little professional development on the interpretation and use of NYSESLAT data.
- The state lays out the policies and practices that school-building test coordinators are expected to follow with regard to accommodations. In fact, the state provides a list of ELLs who are exempt from testing. The district has a mechanism to ensure that guidelines on ELL assessments are followed appropriately. Testing accommodations for ELLs and the exemption policy, however, appear to be inconsistently applied. In some cases, it appeared to the team that school-based staff did not always understand the state policies, didn't know the research and rationale behind the accommodations, or thought that ELLs were being given an unfair advantage with the accommodations.
- Though 34 to 40 percent of ELL students are receiving instruction in Spanish through the bilingual education model and others are developing Spanish literacy through the dual language program at Olmstead, the district does not have a Spanish-language assessment to track progress in Spanish acquisition.
- The team heard that schools that enroll significant numbers of SIFE students (students with interrupted formal education) are often frustrated because the federal, state, and district assessment policies put their schools at risk of not making AYP, even though teachers see substantial progress with these students.
- The district has made some recent efforts to improve its program evaluations, but it has no regular schedule for evaluating various ELL programs. Once again, the result is that the district has very limited data to compare the academic achievement of students in various ELL program models.
- The district appears to have a consistent approach to preparing ELL students for the New York State Assessments. The district has an Action Plan for State Assessments that consists of six weeks of take-home assessments that teachers grade, but some schools also offer after-school programs for parents to build understanding about the assessments; other schools simply translate the information and send it home. In addition to this inconsistency, the plan may fall short because it relies so heavily on parents—whose primary language may not be English—to provide assistance and supervision.

H. Human Capital and Professional Development

This section presents the team's findings and observations about the professional development and other human capital issues related to the teaching of English language learners in the Buffalo Public Schools.

Positive Findings

- The district has offered extensive professional development on its literacy initiative, which most teachers and staff participated in. This staff training was cited as instrumental in the district's ability to raise district reading scores across the board on state tests.
- The district generally offers a wide array of professional development on its various programs and adopted texts. District staff was also keenly aware that additional professional development and support was needed to raise academic achievement among ELLs. Content-area instructional staff also indicated the need for more targeted support and training to address the academic needs of ELLs.
- The SQR report echoed what the Council's team heard during its teacher focus groups: Principals who understood the needs of ELLs were pivotal in making relevant professional development available to teachers and providing opportunities and encouragement for their participation. In other words, principals were seen as key to staff understanding of ELL issues and in encouraging teachers to pursue additional professional development to work with this population. In most cases, however, it was clear to the team that many if not most principals lacked the training needed to provide this leadership.
- The district has a rich layering of teachers, support teachers, coaches, teacher assistants and aides. This was evident in school visits the team conducted and was reported by staff who indicated that schools have math coaches, reading coaches, and technology coach, as well as native-language arts coaches and specialists.
- The district plans a significant investment in multilingual teacher aides. According to documents provided to the team, the district is in the process of hiring teacher aides who speak Burmese/Karen, Somali/Mai-mai/Kizigwa, Arabic, and Spanish to provide more extensive native-language support to students and interpretation services for parents. Five aides would be hired for each of four language groups, for a total of 20 FTE aides to be shared between two schools with large LEP populations. Schools with the largest ELL enrollments are assigned a full-time aide. (See comments under Recommendation 72.)
- The district is strengthening its ability to track participation in professional development. The district has recently implemented a new program, "True North Logic," to track professional development and certification of teachers. This will be particularly useful if the district is able to code participation in specific language-related professional development.
- The district provided two 10-week professional development sessions on the use of Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocols (SIOP) at Lafayette High School and School 30. These professional learning opportunities, not limited to ELL teachers, provided classroom teachers with information on high-quality instruction for ELLs. The district plans to expand this training with a SIOP II series of professional development, follow-up support, and assistance in implementing SIOP strategies.

- Teacher supervisors visit schools to determine professional development needs for school staff. Central office staff members were often seen in schools monitoring programs and providing support.
- The district holds regular meetings with the local teacher preparation programs and colleges to coordinate needs. The chief academic officer, along with other senior staff members involved in teacher hiring meet on a monthly basis with teacher preparation programs at local universities to discuss programming and teacher preparation needs.
- The team reviewed the district's Title III-funded professional development and found it to be relevant and practical. However, the team was unable to determine the reach of Title III-funded training sessions since they were not coordinated with other professional development, and attendance was voluntary. In other words, ELL-related professional development is not integrated into the larger professional development efforts of the district.
- The district is reviewing its professional performance review system that has been in effect for teachers since 1986, stiffening its tenure reviews and increasing accountability requirements for IAs (Instructional Aides).

Areas of Concern

Professional Development

- The district appears to have limited mechanisms to increase the capacity of its staff to serve ELLs because of the limited amount of professional development time in the contract.
- A substantial portion of the district's professional development appears to be defined around implementation of its commercially acquired programs (e.g., Voyager, Direct Instruction, etc.). Much of this professional development does not include much training on differential instruction for ELLs or much training on English language development or academic vocabulary acquisition strategies for ELLs. In addition, there appears to be little professional development on how to make the general education program more accessible to ELLs.
- Professional development on district initiatives and on content areas competes with each other because of the limited number of days for professional development in the collective bargaining agreement (2½ days). The limited amount of professional development squeezes out needed training on ELL issues. Principals can provide additional professional development at monthly after-school meetings (one hour), and a half-day for professional-learning opportunities (PLOs), but the amounts of time are too small in competition with other needs to accommodate much training on ELL issues. Moreover, there is no systematic ELL support from on-site coaches to provide embedded or just-in-time professional development on ELL issues.

- Professional development that is offered often does not incorporate ELL teaching strategies. Staff indicated that professional development provided by content-area teaching and learning directors did not incorporate strategies and material relevant to teaching ELLs. ELL-related professional development appears to be the sole purview and responsibility of the Director of Multilanguage Education.
- ELL-specific professional development is not provided in a systemic, comprehensive way. Interviewees named a variety of ways in which they receive professional development to support ELL instruction, including SIOP training, conference attendance, and other avenues. But the team did not see comprehensive and strategic professional development on English language development, English acquisition, academic vocabulary acquisition, or cooperative learning strategies offered about ELLs districtwide. Nevertheless, several teachers liked the professional development and assistance they did receive from the Department of Multilingual Education.
- Content-area departments often provide professional development by bringing in textbook companies. Some professional-development time is set aside for scoring assessments. Other departments claim remaining professional development time. Teachers also chose from a menu of PLOs, but the selections do not have to meet district instructional or ELL priorities. Finally, the Teacher Center provides additional professional development for teachers, but the team did not hear of efforts to integrate ELL issues into existing training or to ensure that differentiated instructional strategies routinely included ELLs.
- The team saw no evidence that professional development was evaluated routinely for its effects on the academic progress of ELLs.
- The district provides professional development in “Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching,” but the training is limited to ethnic and racial sensitivity and does not include language diversity.

Staffing

- ESL staffing levels are guided by numbers of ELLs and state mandates, but several schools indicated having only two ESL teachers while others indicated they had an ESL teacher per grade. Principals have little authority over staffing in their own buildings and must wait to see what their ELL numbers look like in the fall before they can determine what programs to offer.
- Teachers indicated that they believed that ESL and bilingual teacher shortages were affecting services provided to ELLs. Indeed, the 2006-07 SQR reports noted that some general education teachers without ESL certification were used to provide ESL services. The team saw no evidence of a systemwide recruiting, hiring, or retention strategy for ESL/bilingual teachers.
- Instructional support directors were responsible for a significant amount of non-instructional duties that kept them from their main responsibilities, including improving

ELL services. Specifically, teaching and learning directors were responsible for hiring teachers for their respective content areas and processing teacher-transfer requests.

- Teacher hiring is generally handled by content-area, which means that acquisition of teachers does not necessarily take into account ELL needs in each area but relies more on staff collaboration rather a formal process. The 2006-07 Schools Quality Reviews voiced similar concerns that the teacher-hiring process failed to take into account the needs of ELL students.
- Teachers the team interviewed were often unable to describe state ESL standards, expected outcomes, or grade-level expectations for English-language development, even though the state has guidelines in each of these areas. Teachers interviewed did not know what gains were required on the NYSLAT or what the district expected them to do when ELL students were falling short. In general, it appeared that general education teachers often believed that understanding ESL standards and grade-level expectations for ELLs was the main responsibility of ESL and bilingual teachers.
- Joint planning among ESL and general education teachers was highly regarded and helpful, but teachers interviewed indicated that they were not always sure what they were planning for. They also indicated that such planning was not always encouraged by principals or that school leadership was simply silent on the issue. The team heard that teacher collaboration was well supported in schools where the principals set up common planning time and where general education teachers had received training on the needs of ELLs. In these schools, a principal’s knowledge of ESL and bilingual education made all the difference in creating a professional learning environment for teachers serving ELLs.
- In some schools, the wide variety of languages spoken and of English-proficiency levels made it difficult to use ESL teaching staff efficiently. But in some schools, specific programs for ELLs or SIFE allowed the school to organize its teaching resources around these ELLs. At other schools, ESL teachers worked jointly across grade levels to address the needs of students with comparable academic abilities. One school the team visited had an ESL teacher available at each grade level, so flexible grouping was done grade-by-grade. Staff configurations appeared to depend on a wide range of factors:
 - ✚ The level of language heterogeneity in any given school—the distinct languages students speak and students’ English language proficiency levels
 - ✚ The number of ESL teachers assigned to the school
 - ✚ The relevant qualifications of ESL teachers—languages spoken and specialized knowledge of teaching strategies for ELLs and SIFE
 - ✚ The existence of specific programs within a school focusing on ELL needs
 - ✚ School leadership and its support for ELL-relevant professional development for teachers, particularly if they wished to become ESL-certified

- ✚ A school's leadership in providing time and space for joint planning sessions across grades or academic abilities that would address ELL needs. In some schools, ESL and special education teachers do not attend joint meetings.

Overall, the team did not see consistent use of staff planning time whereby effective practices could be shared.

- The team saw large numbers of instructional staff available in schools, but in some classrooms the team saw unengaged students who were ignored by adults present in the room.
- The district's instructional coaching structure is not set up to handle ELL needs on a systemwide basis. The district has a cadre of content coaches that meet monthly, and each school has a literacy coach to provide reading support in the general education program, but they do not routinely provide strategies to either general education or ESL teachers for working with ELLs. These coaches have no systematic training on providing ELL support in second language acquisition or instructional strategies for ELLs.
- The district also has a layer of support teachers in each content area (English, language arts, math, science, and social studies) who go into schools to work with teachers, but they can only volunteer support and assistance. Moreover, the district has an ESL, a native-language arts teacher, and a SIFE support teacher funded by federal Title III funds. They have no supervisory responsibilities and may not intervene in scheduling issues (which has a direct bearing on ELL services), but they may co-teach, model lessons, and conduct classroom demonstrations. The support teachers are also expected to mentor teachers. Moreover, the duties of coaches and support-teachers were often described in overlapping ways.
- ✚ Support teachers are expected to have an understanding of English language arts standards, native-language arts and ESL standards, and the indicators for each. Their responsibilities include providing professional development for teachers to ensure that they include the appropriate standards and indicators in their lesson plan. However, the team was told that the choice of whether this professional development takes place is often left up to the individual or the principals.
- ✚ Support teachers meet with department heads (content staff) and attend joint planning sessions with reading coaches to examine data that will inform instruction. These teachers were clearly aware of and sensitive to ELL issues across the content areas, but they indicated that they lacked the professional development to provide better support for ESL teachers.
- ✚ Support teachers were sometimes used to translate tests into the most prevalent languages, but their use raises challenges about the validity of the assessment results and uncertainty about the quality of translations. It is also inefficient to have translations done at each campus.

- ✚ The support teachers are sometimes used to create materials, resources, and supports to supplement the limited ELL strategies provided by the publishers in their textbooks and professional development. For instance, the commercial pacing guides often reference only materials available in Spanish, so support teachers are often asked to supplement the guides as best they can.
- The role of instructional aides and assistants for ELLs is unclear. The instructional assistants and aides (IAs) interviewed provided positive feedback about their experience working with ELL students and special education students who were pulled out of classes to work in small groups of two or three students, but their formal roles with ELLs were less certain.
- ✚ Other than indicating that they “follow what the teacher is doing,” it did not seem that IAs had a clear sense of their responsibilities to support instruction for ELLs. Teachers tell the IAs what to do every morning, so there may be considerable variability in how IAs are used in the classrooms across the district.
- ✚ Some IAs work with ELLs when they, too, speak the ELLs’ language, but the process is not formalized. Otherwise, the IAs appear not to have received professional development in working with ELLs.
- ✚ Some IAs are assigned to multiple schools because of their language and other skills, although they appear not to be used consistently from one school to another.
- ✚ The district was planning to hire 20 FTE teaching assistants to provide native-language support to students and to interpret for parents.
- Monthly meetings with teacher preparation partners appear to yield mixed results. The state college staff who met with the team described a higher education community that was very active and engaged with Buffalo’s immigrant and ELL community and worked closely with local authorities and organizations, such as the African Education Alliance, to improve cross-cultural understanding and support for newcomers. The district staff indicated that the student/teacher placement protocol developed in conjunction with the universities helped improve incoming teacher quality. But university staff interviewed by the team and district staff indicated that collaborating with one another could be difficult.

H. Parents and Community

This section presents the team’s findings and observations about the school district’s work with parents and community groups related to ELLs. The team’s observations are drawn from interviews with parents and community representatives conducted during the site visits. Most parents had children who participated in the district’s bilingual education program.

Positive Findings

- Support for the newcomer center at Buffalo City Public School 45 was very strong. Parents interviewed by the team indicated that the newcomer program created a positive experience where parents had meaningful and helpful communications with teachers and

school personnel. Parents were provided frequent information on their child's progress in vocabulary and reading. ELL parents were welcome as volunteers and learned English at the school. Some notices were translated at the school level into relevant languages such as Arabic and Burmese.

- The district's Parent Center provides a comprehensive program that is supported by multiple funding sources, including Title I and other external resources. The center serves about 20 to 25 families per class and over 150 families per year. It also provides transportation for parents and children to ensure their participation in educationally appropriate programs. Parents, many of whom were ELLs, are provided ESL classes and adult-learning opportunities taught by ESL teachers. In addition, the center uses part-time teachers and college students to help with homework. Moreover, parents are provided other information on topics, including parenting, nutrition, and health. Finally, the center provides childcare and educational activities for children aged 1 to 3 while parents are in classes. The team considered the program to be a best practice.
- The Department of Multilingual Education has recently instituted Parent Academies. One strand is for newcomer parents to learn about the district and what is taught, school rules, grades and report cards, and roles and responsibility of students, parents, and school staff. The other strand is a leadership academy for parents of ELLs to help them be better advocates for their children and encourage them to participate in parent groups.
- Community members report that the school district has made substantial progress over the last several years. Though not widely expressed, some community members did indicate to the team that they believed the school district was raising academic achievement.
- The city of Buffalo can boast of having committed higher education institutions and community agencies working to assist newcomers to the city and the school district. Buffalo State College, social service organizations, and public safety agencies all indicated that they were trying to provide greater outreach to refugee communities.

Areas of Concern

- Parents and community members expressed frustration with what they saw as limited information coming out of the district about procedures, programs, overall student achievement, and individual school options. Parents reported that school-by-school information was hard to get without actually going to the buildings, so choices were harder to make. Most parents also indicated that school information was mostly provided in English, making it hard for non-English speaking parents to know what each school offered.
- The district has made substantial academic progress over the last few years. Many parents and community members praised this improvement in student achievement, but many other people knew nothing about it. It was thought that one reason the district has not received more credit for its recent gains or generated more community support is because its communications office is so small.

- The district's achievement data paint a picture of increasing success that seems to be at odds with the picture that parents and the community sometimes have. Some parents and community members are more focused on low levels of performance than on the gains that have been made. Fairly consistently, the team heard parental and community frustration about communications, program accessibility, transparency, and student placement.
- Most ELL parents viewed as a mystery the application and admission criteria and process to gain entrance into various exam, magnet, and charter schools. ELL parents largely relied on word-of-mouth communication for school-by-school information.
- The district's school choice options and bilingual/ESL programming are difficult for ELL parents and refugees to navigate. Parents and staff alike reported that parents are not provided much assistance when selecting a school or program for their children. The difficulty arises when the school choice system requires that parents find information about each individual school on their own, especially when bilingual education programs are located at five schools and over 20 schools offer ESL services.
- The district's well-regarded Parent Center is far from meeting demand, even though it is funded through differing program sources. The center always has a waiting list for GED and ESL classes due to limited space, and could use additional support.
- Parent support for the dual language program is not schoolwide but program-specific. Parents, administrators, and teachers alike reported that a belief among stakeholders and community members that students in the dual-language immersion program had lower scores than students schoolwide and that the differences were a source of resentment at the school, Olmstead. The perceptions may not be true, but the team did not examine the scores to determine what was true and what was not.
- The district does not have a translation process systemwide or staff dedicated at the central office to provide translation services. Interviewees indicated that the lack of an explicit process for translations resulted in inconsistent practices and poor-quality translations.

The district and its various departments rely on the Department of Multilingual Education to comply with language-access requirements under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. Not only does this create workload issues, but the district is not building capacity across its departments to be linguistically and culturally responsive to the ELL community. Important documents such as the code of conduct and enrollment guidelines are not provided to ELL parents in a language they understand routinely.

- The districtwide ELL advisory committee is currently inactive. A Bilingual Advisory Committee composed of community members and district staff was functioning in 2004 but was dissolved in 2005. It was not clear why it dissolved, but interviewees believed its demise hindered communication with the ELL community. The Title I and Special Education Advisory Committees continue to function.

- The ELL community perceives that the district lacks a mechanism to hear its concerns on a regular basis. Conversely, the district has no systematic process to learn about community concerns. The district inadvertently sends the message that the voice of the ELL community is not valued.
- Potential external partners indicated that it was often difficult to access the district in a way that would build trust and form lasting connections with the ELL community. Similarly, district staff indicated that it was sometimes difficult for them to obtain clear information from community agencies around support for ELLs. It was clear that improving formal communications and collaborative support should be a priority for both entities.
- The district has not harnessed the city’s willingness to volunteer in the schools and has no well-developed procedure for volunteer background checks, or assignment, training, and monitoring of community volunteers.
- Staff members and community members alike were consistent in their observations about the fragmented nature of the programs and services provided to newcomers and immigrant students. Here are some of the most common concerns:
 - ✚ After-school tutoring is not widely available districtwide and is generally organized school by school.
 - ✚ There are no clear pathways to graduation for many ELLs, and supports to get these students on track for graduation are weak.
 - ✚ ELL students who are candidates for graduation have very low levels of performance, low GPAs, and low scores on SAT and Regents exams.
 - ✚ Non-school family factors exacerbate scheduling challenges—e.g., students miss classes because they are assisting their families with social service appointments and providing translations for them.
 - ✚ Parents need more assistance with choosing schools, and students need more assistance with selecting classes.

The team did not always think that these perceptions were well-grounded in evidence, but did think it was important to indicate what people interviewed by the team perceived.

- The district’s Website lacks resources for ELL parents, school-by-school information, and up-to-date contact information. Parents indicated that they needed more information about the schools. Also, parents indicated that the district lacked a regular parent satisfaction survey.
- Parents and community members alike expressed concern about the district’s responsiveness to cultural and language differences. Parents indicated that they did not always feel welcome to speak their native language on school grounds.

I. Funding and Compliance

This section examines funding and resource allocations supporting ELL programs and achievement in the Buffalo Public Schools.

Positive Findings

- The district's document (A-6) for 2007-08 provides a clear picture of the multiple funding sources used to support Buffalo's ELL programs. Exhibit 22 below presents the main sources of funding for ELL activities. The largest ELL funding source is state Foundation Aid (\$6.745 million in 2007-08), and this is the funding source that provides resources for districts with struggling schools. New York State budget documents show that for 2008-09 Buffalo's total state aid is \$432.8 million.
- The state allows some of the increase in year-to-year Foundation Aid to be used for growth in general operating costs and investment in ongoing programs, but the majority of the increase is subject to the state's Contract for Excellence initiative (started in 2007-08) to focus expenditures on proven strategies to improve achievement. In the 2008-09, the budget was revised by adding programs to help ELLs meet grade-level requirements. Accordingly, the district provided an additional \$1 million for ELL program improvement in 2008-09.
- The “Contract for Excellence” funding of \$40.2 million—or 9 percent—of district spending requires that districts implement accepted strategies to improve achievement: lowering class size, increasing student time-on-task, and providing full-day pre-Kindergarten or Kindergarten.

Exhibit 22. Major Funding Sources of ELL Programs

<i>Funding Source</i>	<i>Amount</i>	<i>Uses and Activities</i>
Foundation Aid for ELLs	\$6.745 million	Primarily for staff—88.6 ESL or bilingual teachers, interpretation services for state assessments
Contract for Excellence (08-09)	\$1.0 million	Districtwide ELL program improvement
Title III (bilingual and immigrant)	\$525,128	Two support teachers, one coordinator, .25 FTE supervisor, substitute teachers for PD, one SIFE support teacher, teachers to run the summer Jump Start program, supplemental instructional materials for students and to support professional development activities.
Title I	\$158,141	One bilingual counselor serving multiple schools with high ELL enrollment and two bilingual (English-Somali) teacher aides for high-need ELLs
Total in 2007-08	\$7,428,269	
Total in 2008-09	\$8,428,269	Contract for Excellence increase

- The Campaign for Fiscal Equity (CFE) lawsuit resulted in additional state aid to the Buffalo school district. The substantial increase resulted in smaller class sizes. (Regular classes have 20 student and intensive instruction classes have 10 students.) In addition, the district worked out a longer school day and longer school year by overlapping and staggering schedules and adding a voluntary summer school.
- The district appears to be compliant with major federal and state ELL program requirements. It was not the team's charge to do a compliance audit, but the team did not spot any major compliance problems in the course of this review.

Areas of Concern

- The team did not see any evidence that the district had evaluated the programs, staffing levels, and strategies it put into place with the additional funding.
- There is no programmatic connection between the district's Title I services and ELL programs. The team saw little coordination between the Title I office and the Department of Multilingual Education. Also, it was not clear how the district used its Title I funds to support the academic needs of ELLs. District staff indicated they had no idea how many Title I students were ELLs. The lack of coordination suggests that Title I-eligible students who also happen to be ELLs may not be receiving all the services they are eligible for.
- New York State has a three-year limit on funding for bilingual education that can be extended to six years. Beyond the sixth year, there is no funding for students who continue in bilingual education. Staff appeared to be generally knowledgeable about this funding limitation, and it appeared to drive some of the program decision about ELLs. The district does not appear to have a defined three-year or six-year program sequence for ELLs. The district's data tracking the numbers of students by the number of years they had been in an ELLs were not readily available.

CHAPTER 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter summarizes the proposals of the Council of the Great City Schools' Strategic Support Team to the Buffalo Public Schools on how to improve services for the district's English language learners and strengthen their academic achievement. This chapter presents those proposals in the same categories as in the previous chapter.

A. Leadership and Strategic Direction

1. Re-affirm the district's policy of ensuring full access for ELLs to the general education program and its commitment to raising the academic achievement of ELLs. The board's policy regarding ELLs adopted in 2006 needs to be reaffirmed to ensure that its vision for improving ELL achievement is seen as a strong priority for the entire district. The board's initiative and superintendent's support for reviewing the district's ELL programs should be seen by the community as a strong first step in establishing higher expectations for ELLs.
2. Convene a series of seminars and professional development sessions for the board and senior staff on the best research and practices on the academic attainment of ELLs in urban schools. These seminars could provide a strong foundation for district action and involve short work sessions or briefings from experts and from districts that are making progress with these students.
3. Charge senior instructional staff with articulating high expectations for the academic achievement of ELLs throughout the district in various staff and principals meetings. Build achievement data on ELLs into regular staff briefings and school information sessions.
4. Name a senior staff team to review and update the Academic Achievement Plan, Addendum, and Literacy across the Curriculum to incorporate ELLs as an explicit and integral part of the district's strategy to raise achievement. General references to cultural and linguistic diversity should not substitute for specific strategies for raising ELL achievement.
5. Charge a cross-functional team of senior administrators, teachers, and community members to develop a multiyear strategic plan for carrying out the school board's renewed policy on ELLs. The district's current policy on ELLs is comprehensive and sufficiently detailed to provide effective direction for improving its ELL program. Since the policy's adoption, the district has made significant improvements, but there is little overall strategic planning that would integrate ELLs into the academic plan.
6. Create a district refugee roundtable to foster better coordination and collaboration on behalf of refugee students and their families. Hold regular planning meetings (two to three times a year) to exchange insights, issues, harness resources, and stay abreast of upcoming developments regarding refugee arrivals and their needs. It is critical to develop a new sense of partnership with the relocations agencies and other agencies working on behalf of the refugee immigrant population. A collaborative relationship should bring forth the best ideas and increase the resources available to the district for serving these children.

7. Develop and roll out a communications strategy for the district that will improve outreach efforts with the broader ELL community. The district might consider including various external organizations (refugee agencies, universities, and community groups) in the communications planning process with internal staff. The communications strategy should be in multiple languages, include a translation and interpretation component, and include the goals described in the next section. Finally, the communications strategy should include both an internal (district staff) and external (community) component.

B. Goals and Accountability

8. Charge a high-level district team with developing concrete academic growth goals and targets for the academic progress of ELLs. The team should include the Office of Shared Accountability, the Department of Multilingual Education, the Division of Teaching and Learning, and the Office of School Performance. The goals and targets should be specific and measurable for districtwide performance for ELLs and school-by-school gains. In addition, the targets should include measures of the achievement gaps between ELLs and non-ELLs.
9. Ensure that ELL academic growth targets are incorporated into school improvement plans and are thoroughly reviewed by community superintendents to ensure that planned instructional strategies are capable of attaining the goals.
10. Form a senior team comprising the director of the Department of Multilingual Education and leaders from the Human Resources Department, the Division of Teaching and Learning, and the Office of Shared Accountability, and charge this group with incorporating districtwide and school-by-school ELL achievement goals into central office personnel evaluations. It was clear to the team that the district's efforts to improve ELL achievement were hampered by the lack of accountability for whether the students succeeded or not. Currently, student achievement, particularly among ELLs, is not part of personnel evaluations.
11. Incorporate school-by-school academic targets and goals for ELLs in principals' personnel evaluations. The revamped evaluations for school principals would hold them accountable for academic progress of ELLs and would include assessments of community and parent relations. Fold recommendations from SQR reviews into principals' personnel evaluations.
12. Charge the community superintendent(s) with responsibility for overseeing the superintendent's special district to meet routinely with the director of Department of Multilingual Education to check progress on attaining ELL goals.

C. Curriculum and Instruction

13. Direct the Division of Teaching and Learning, in conjunction with the Department of Multilingual Education, to establish a process that ensures that ELL issues are incorporated into curriculum development and instructional support, taking care not to produce documents that are so voluminous that no one uses them. Compilations of all curriculum-relevant materials into a single document that includes the Academic Plan (and updates), curriculum guide, pacing guide, pacing system, and ELL program guide might be more manageable if they were posted online with links to teacher resources. (See programs in Dallas and Anchorage.)

14. Review the district's Academic Achievement Plan and literacy initiative for gaps in priorities and services for ELL students, make appropriate changes, and broadly disseminate them. The team should clarify the instructional components of the AAP and reading program that have specific implications for ELLs and build them into the revised plans. The ELL component should include

- Research on second-language acquisition, English language development, and academic vocabulary acquisition with pedagogy that links native language literacy with reading proficiency in English
- Some recognition of the content area knowledge and skills that ELLs already acquired through the district's transitional and dual language bilingual education programs
- Explicit secondary language literacy elements that are validated, supported, and monitored to ensure that native-language literacy skills transfer to English
- Cooperative learning strategies that allow students to learn from each other and from native-English-speaking students
- An articulation of how native-language literacy developed in bilingual programs facilitates English literacy over time
- Academic vocabulary acquisition, comprehension, and English language development, as well as the current emphasis on phonemic awareness, phonics, and fluency
- How data on ELLs are to be used and with what frequency, in order to modify the instructional programs for ELLs districtwide and enhance the professional development of teachers working with these students.

15. Review the Superintendent's Special District initiative to identify schools with substantial numbers of ELLs, and adjust the strategies to address the instructional needs of ELLs in those schools. As part of the review, senior staff should

- Identify school needs related to ELL instruction, based on disaggregated achievement data and specific growth targets for ELLs
- Determine the nature of the assistance needed by each school
- Develop a cohesive and coordinated ELL instructional improvement strategy for these schools that includes supporting general education teachers who have ELLs in their classrooms or who will be receiving ELLs
- Structure a strategic-funding framework to support the work of central office and the schools
- Build a culture of shared responsibility for the program and success of every child.

16. Charge the Division of Teaching and Learning and Department of Multilingual Education with conducting a thorough review of the district's current draft ESL benchmarks to ensure that the document incorporates standards important to the academic development of ELLs and all students. The analysis should:
- Identify how current programs need to be modified or supplemented to fill gaps between district materials and state standards
 - Include skills, teaching sequences, instructional pacing, and levels of expected rigor in the revised instructional program
 - Develop a coherent set of materials linked to each other where teachers will find unpacked state standards, suggested materials and strategies to fill textbook gaps, examples of student work, and resources for teachers (e.g., how to scaffold ELLs' learning of complex concepts across grade levels).
17. Articulate a clear developmental sequence for ELLs as they move through English proficiency levels and go from bilingual education to ESL programs and exit from ELL programs altogether.
18. Continue to develop pacing guides for ELA and other content areas. Incorporate relevant references to ESL standards and ELL instructional strategies to ensure the alignment of ELA and ESL standards and provide helpful resources for administrators and teachers. Pacing guides might include:
- instructional strategies for students at differing levels of language proficiency
 - direct links to ESL standards and district benchmark documents
 - references to additional teacher resources
 - links to resources on academic vocabulary building, English-language development, and content-area resources.

The district may want to look at pacing guides developed and used by the St. Paul, Anchorage, and Dallas school districts.

19. Include ELL staff leadership in all major district curriculum and instructional planning sessions, textbook adoptions, initiatives, and problem-solving meetings to ensure that ELL academic needs are taken into account at the beginning of district efforts when it is easier to integrate them.
20. Use the district's school-by-school data and disaggregated scores by group to identify which schools and programs appear to be showing the greatest progress with ELLs, and begin the process of reviewing these programs to determine why they are working so well. The district does have pockets of effectiveness with ELLs that could be used as exemplars of progress. The review should also include an examination of fidelity of program implementation,

success of English acquisition, content-area progress, and the ability to sustain gains over time. The process might also include these elements:

- The State School Quality Review self-assessment tool, whose results can be used to provide feedback, guide discussions and reflection, and identify components of why programs are successful or not.
- Discussion groups among principals with large ELL enrollment concerning practices that produce the best results for these students.
- ELL participation in special education and gifted and talented programs, extracurricular activities, course-taking patterns, and access to higher-end courses like Advanced Placement.
- A communications component that would begin sharing results of the reviews with the broader public and other schools. This might help improve transparency and confidence that the district is working on these issues.

The reviews should also include a broad range of program types in order to avoid simplistic conclusions about the effectiveness of ESL *versus* bilingual education.

21. Charge a cross-functional team from the Division of Teaching and Learning and the Department of Multilingual Education with reviewing current ELL instructional programs for their capacity to enhance comprehension and instructional rigor. Scores indicate that ELL students are doing poorly in comprehension skills, and the team's classroom visits often found teaching at very low levels of rigor. The review would entail an examination of disaggregated data and a comprehensive look at the language demands of the programs, materials, and assessments in all content areas.
22. Charge a team of second language acquisition specialists and content-area general education teachers with revising the draft benchmark document, based on the district's review. The revision should ensure that the document and the staff are clear about ESL standards and how they are reflected in instruction. This re-write is necessary not only because of the deficiencies highlighted by the Council's team, but because New York State will be issuing new and integrated ELA/ESL standards in 2010. The district's June 2007 draft is a good starting point for the revisions, but the revised document should serve as a tool for helping to infuse ESL into the regular curriculum guide and inform teachers what is expected from students at each proficiency level. The district might want to keep in mind the following points:
 - The document should convey a vision that is consistent with board policy and other implementation and guidance documents.
 - ELL instructional staff and instructional staff from all content areas should be involved in developing the document. Content staff and ELL staff should work together rather than separately on each content section.

- The purpose of the revised document should be to help instructional staff members understand ESL standards. The document should provide strategies and resources for working with ELLs and sample tasks and activities that align to district priorities. (This would also apply to grade-level academic objectives beyond ESL.)
- The process should include revised classroom-observation tools/walk-through/look-for document(s) that reflect the ESL standards and ensure that teaching and learning for ELLs meet those standards.

The district team might want to adhere closely to the state-produced ESL standards, performance indicators, and samples. The Council team looked at the state documents and found them to be of high quality and user-friendly. The proficiency definitions provide a more detailed description of the four modalities and the sub-levels for each proficiency level than the Buffalo benchmark document does. The district team might also want to look at the ESL standards and ELL strategies in Dallas and Denver.

23. Encourage senior instruction and bilingual staff to visit peers from other major urban school systems and work with them in deciding on how to restructure the district's ELL programs. The Council would recommend visiting St. Paul, Dallas, New York City, and other city school systems to see how they are making substantial gains in ELL achievement.

D. Program Design and Delivery System

24. Re-conceive the district's structuring of its academic programs for ELLs to ensure that these students have full access to the school system's general education program, rather than having a default program for ELLs that isolates them academically from the mainstream. The current program separates ELLs from the general education program instructionally and physically and fails to create a pipeline for these students towards graduation and postsecondary opportunities. In its present form, the program does not live up to the board's vision for full access to the best instruction the district can offer. At present, instruction for ELLs is conceived as a Tier II and Tier III intervention where language deficits need to be remediated. The Council's team suggests reorienting the district's view of ELL instruction to one that is a Tier I program aligned with state ESL standards and fully accessible to ELLs. The shift in orientation would also mean a change from the district's current orientation of ELL programming as a compliance exercise to one that is designed to enhance academic attainment. Specifically, this reorientation of the program would involve several actions:
 - Consolidating ELL enrollments into a select number of schools (grades K-8) in order to provide quality programming and support from the central office. The district has already begun a phased-in approach to such a consolidation but would benefit from a more strategic approach that is also made clear and transparent to the ELL families and general community. This recommendation would also address the problem of exempting so many ELLs from AYP.
 - Broadening or increasing the number of ELL programs into more district high schools, including exam schools, in order to provide greater access to quality programming and reduce isolation. Ensure articulation to K-8 schools with consolidated ELL programs.

- Establishing New York State programmatic requirements (*CR Part 154, 117, and others related to ELLs*) on school and grade-level ELL enrollments as the standard for the district. District staff members are divided about the value of the state standards—Some welcome them as specifying a floor of services for ELLs, and others believe that the requirements are too restrictive. This leads some school-based staff to try to limit the numbers of ELLs in their schools in order to avoid having to implement a bilingual education program.
- Selecting the most effective, research-based pedagogies on second-language acquisition for ELLs, native-language literacy, and English language development, consistent with a revised Academic Achievement Plan.¹⁶ This would require that the district broadly disseminate the latest research and provide professional development to instructional leaders and staff members who work with ELLs.
- Creating a cohesive and integrated support structure for ELL programs rather than one that is fractured along philosophical lines of which model is better than another. There is room for multiple models and approaches (including ESL and bilingual), but the district’s approach should focus less on model specificity and integrity and more on the instructional quality of the program and its surrounding support structure, data, professional development, and staffing. The new approach should:
 - ✚ Assure equity and equitable access to the district’s core instructional program, including gifted and talented programs, for ELLs
 - ✚ Require the collaboration and shared responsibility of staff at all levels for the achievement of ELLs
 - ✚ Provide central office strategic support to schools to implement quality programs for ELLs (guidance, professional development, and monitoring)
 - ✚ Articulate clear academic goals for ELLs: high academic achievement, English language proficiency, and attainment of postsecondary success.

The redesigned ELL program should be (a) grounded in the district’s general instructional program to ensure full and broad access to high-level academic content, (b) aligned to the district’s broad academic goals for the achievement of all students, and (c) defined around New York State’s “Seven Elements of Effective Programs for LEP/ELLs.”¹⁷ These elements, however, should not be limited to instruction solely in ELL models but should be applied more broadly to all instruction rendered to ELLs.

¹⁶ See Council of the Great City Schools (2009). *Succeeding With English Language Learners: Lessons Learned from the Great City Schools*; and Council of the Great City Schools (2007). *Improving Teaching and Learning for English Language Learners in Urban Schools*.

¹⁷ (1) High standards for ELLs, (2) strong literacy development for ELLs, (3) qualified/well trained educators for ELLs, (4) school/district leadership committed to educational excellence for ELLs, (5) positive school climate for ELLs, (6) parent/community involvement, and (7) assessment and accountability.

25. Charge the Department of Multilingual Education with developing a comprehensive and user-friendly manual to guide ELL programming and its implementation. The manual would include a summary of the best research; information that is currently contained in disparate district memoranda and documents; overall district vision, priorities, and approaches with ELLs; and overall strategies and support mechanisms from the central office that the schools could call on. The manual might also describe programmatic components of the district's strategy (aligned to New York State ESL standards) and include such information as—

- *ELL instructional model descriptions*—Include ESL, bilingual education, dual language immersion, and transitional programming with their respective goals and approaches. These model descriptions should follow New York State ESL standards and ESL/ELA unit requirements based on the NYSESLAT, but such requirements should be viewed only as compliance requirements and structures and not mistaken for the instructional plan itself. Key elements would include—
 - ✚ *Academic Goals*—These would be clearly articulated for each of the models. For example, all three Freestanding ESL, bilingual education, and newcomer models have the same academic goal to ensure that ELLs acquire needed proficiency in English in all four language modalities in order to succeed in the general instructional program. But the dual-language immersion model also has a goal of providing literacy in two languages (Spanish/English) for ELLs and native English-speakers.
 - ✚ *Research-based instructional approach*—The instructional approach is what sets the models apart and defines key elements such as language of instruction and teacher qualifications. Descriptions should be linked to the district's revised academic plan and to research on the transfer of skills between native-language literacy and English literacy (i.e., the role of native-language literacy in supporting literacy development in English.)
 - ✚ *Language Allocation Policies*—These would relate the instructional models to the language of instruction (L1 or L2) and the relative use of L1 and L2 during the school day by content area.
- *Student placement criteria*—Include each ELL program model, the criteria used to place students in each model, and the criteria for transitioning or moving between models, if necessary.
- *Bilingual Education Model*—Include placement of ELLs into one of three levels of the bilingual education program and monitoring movement across levels using NYSESLAT scores and interim assessments (aligned to the NYSESLAT). The manual might include how placement of students could be done to ensure that schools have adequate numbers of ELLs at each of the three levels to facilitate instructional groupings. This structure might mitigate some of the complaints the team heard regarding the challenges of teaching very heterogeneous students with different levels of English proficiency.
- *ESL and Newcomer models*—Include how to allow for clustering of low-incidence language groups and clustering of ELLs with similar English proficiency levels. This

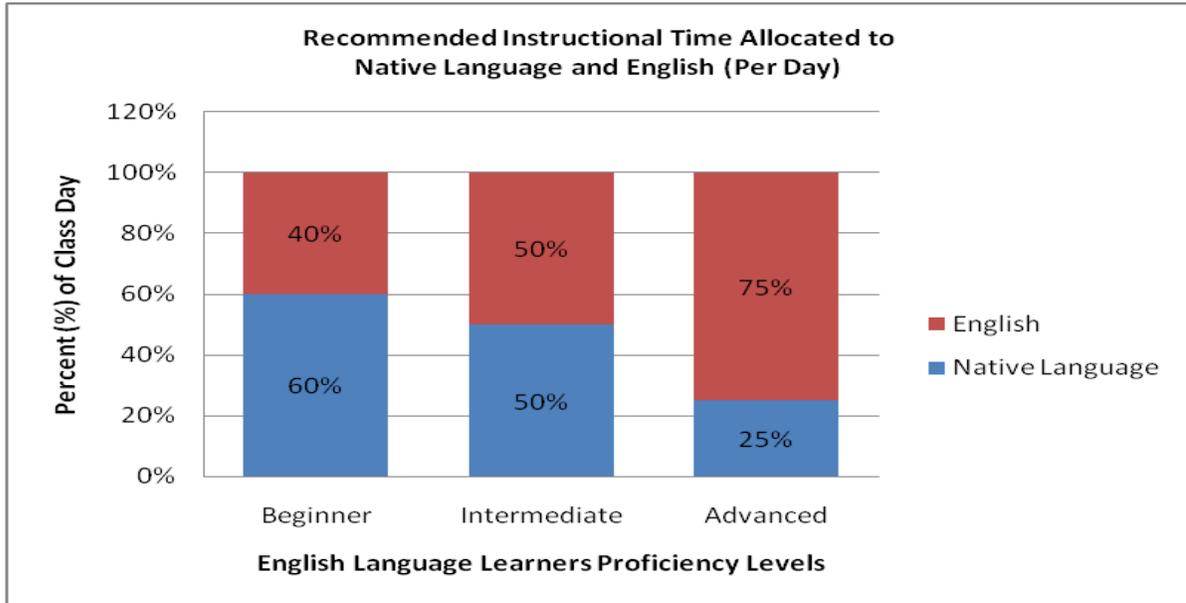
might involve locating more ELLs in fewer schools (see recommendation 24) to allow the central office to better support the programs with professional development and other centralized services such as translations and native-language instructional support.

- *Staffing levels and qualifications*—Specify the staffing levels required at a school in order to carry out the models in an articulated and coherent fashion for all grade levels containing ELLs. Staff descriptions should include ESL/bilingual teachers, IAs, and the qualifications of other instructional staff and leadership. Principals' qualifications and knowledge of ELL programs might also be described. The manual should also include roles, responsibilities and expectations for all ELL instructional staff.
- *Assessment instruments and procedures*—Include descriptions of and administration guide to the placement and monitoring assessments in the content areas and English-language acquisition. This would include information related to Spanish assessments for students receiving instruction in Spanish through the bilingual education or the dual language immersion models.

The district might look at documents from the St. Paul Public Schools ("Bilingual Educational Assistant Guide") that could serve as a guide for Buffalo. The Seattle public schools recently worked closely with St. Paul to revise its "Roles and Responsibilities for Instructional Assistants."

26. Consider changing the district's Language Allocation Policy (LAP) to reflect the goals of a transitional bilingual education model. The current goal of the district's bilingual education model is for ELLs to receiving increasingly more instruction in English as s/he acquires English proficiency. The team recommends that the district consider adopting a LAP that increases the amount of instruction in English for ELLs who are at the intermediate and advanced levels of proficiency by adding a third tier. For example, the LAP used in New York City provides a three-level model: ELLs at the beginning proficiency level are placed in programs using a 60/40 (Native Language/English) instruction ratio; ELLs at the intermediate level of proficiency move to or are placed in programs using a 50/50 language of instruction ratio; and ELLs at the advanced level of English proficiency receive instruction for 75 percent of the day in English. The team proposes that Buffalo move to this approach. See Exhibit 23 below.

Exhibit 23. Suggested Instructional Time Allocated to Native Language and English Instruction per Day



This suggested revision to the LAP for Buffalo would take the following into consideration:

- ESL-certified teachers and teachers qualified to use ESL strategies appropriate for development of academic English and vocabulary should increase instruction in English.
- The district's content-area (ELA and math) instructional time requirements would need to be incorporated into the LAP ratios. Instruction would take place in L1 or L2 to provide access to the expectations for concept and skill development in the content areas.¹⁸
- LAP would take into account the New York State required units of ELA and ESL for ELLs.
- Data-support teams would provide assistance to school staff to ensure the language of instruction ratio (Language Allocation Policy) is tied to NYSESLAT scores.
- Changes in the LAP would be incorporated into classroom guidance documents so teachers are clear about what they are supposed to do.

The team suggests that the district look at how New York City has implemented its language allocation policy. The district needs to give this recommendation considerable thought.

27. Design and implement a sheltered-English component in content areas for secondary school students, who are over-age and students who need additional support and instruction in English, and implement the revised Language Allocation Policy that would provide more English instruction.

¹⁸ 90-minute literacy and the 70-minute math blocks.

28. Charge the Department of Multilingual Education with articulating a comprehensive pathway for ELLs towards graduation. The design should ensure that students identified as Limited English Proficient receive ELL services in a continuous and coherent manner as they progress at each grade level toward proficiency and graduation. Elements would include:

- *Consistent and coherent ELL programming* at each grade until the student exits the ELL program (LEP status). This might require creating pre-determined K-12 feeder patterns to ensure ELLs have consistency in required instructional services.
- *Clear transition points for ELLs, contingent on the model of instruction, as they advance in their English proficiency.* For instance, the district would need to determine if the dual language immersion program would be continued up through grade 12. And the district would need to better define pathways for students with interrupted formal education (SIFE) to ensure graduation. Finally, the district would need to link various social service agencies and refugee agencies to the pathways to create extended-time opportunities and ensure other appropriate supports along the way.
- *Fair and linguistically neutral processes for ELLs to access the entire curriculum.* The district needs to review all of its screening and admissions procedures for accessing magnet programs, gifted and talented programs, AP, honors, exam schools, and the like to ensure that ELLs have full and appropriate access. The screening and entrance procedures should be linguistically neutral to allow equitable participation by ELLs. The district might want to consider using Spanish-language tools, other test results such as English proficiency, or a non-verbal test (e.g., the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test--NNAT). The district might also consider allowing special accommodations to broaden access of ELLs into special admissions programs and schools.

The pathway might require a consolidation of ELL programs currently offered in over 33 schools to ensure (1) consistent and coherent ELL programming; and (2) central office support and monitoring across all grade levels. ELL-program designations might be set up for schools that have appropriate staffing and numbers of students. Schools that have an ELL program by virtue of having a single ESL teacher might not count and might be consolidated. (See recommendation 24.) Designated schools would provide a fully articulated program for ELL students in all grades or feeders in all three levels of proficiency. Dual language programs might be phased in, one grade at a time, over several years. Schools that have effective programs, as determined by concrete district performance data, might serve as anchors for the designated program placements. For example, the Frank A. Sedita School might serve as a bilingual education anchor, and the International School might serve as a high-school ESL anchor. Enrollment projections for individual schools would need to be taken into account to accommodate incoming students and clear pathways ensured, giving students a well-articulated K-12 program school to school.

29. Consider expanding the existing dual language immersion program into a dual-language immersion school to meet unmet demand. The district might consider expanding the program to the entire school for the following reasons. This would:

- expand the number of available placements,

- allow the principal, school leadership team, and instructional staff to focus on implementing a single model of second language acquisition,
- diminish the perceived resentment between the dual language program and the general program, and
- decrease the isolation of ELL students.

The district might also consider placing a dual-language immersion program alongside a bilingual education program in a single school. This would provide many of the same benefits.

30. Expand learning opportunities for ELLs through SES or after-school tutorial programs. The district's managed-instructional program and the practice of pulling ELLs out of class present scheduling challenges for ensuring that ELLs have full access to the district's general educational program. The district might consider targeting ELLs for more after-school tutorial sessions to supplement content-area and English language development instruction that they might have missed during the regular school day. This might be done with SES providers (if they have proven to be effective), the district's own after-school programs, or in conjunction with one or more of the community organizations interested in ELL issues. The district ought to pursue SES-provider status from the state or seek a waiver from the federal government to allow it to provide services to ELLs specifically.
31. Develop a tiered-support model based on a needs assessment of schools and prioritization of programs to provide assistance to schools in improving instruction to ELLs. The coaching support from the central office should be based, in part, on its capacity to monitor program improvements. Appendix C provides samples of support models developed by and used in the Seattle Public Schools.
32. Consider placing ESL teachers in a co-teaching role in regular classrooms (push-in) on an all-day basis rather than having them devote so much time to pull-out ESL instruction.
33. Set a long-term goal of increasing the number of and participation in dual language programs throughout the city.

E. Program Monitoring

34. Charge a cross-functional team from the Division of Teaching and Learning, the Department of Multilingual Education, and Human Resources to redesign the existing classroom walk-through tool to incorporate ELL issues. The Council's team suggests redesigning and combining into a single document the existing "Classroom Assessment Tool" and the Department of Multilingual Education's walk-through document. Incorporating elements of each of the two documents, the redesigned tool should—
 - Include instructional strategies that are suitable for ELL programs and focus on instruction (not compliance) and on differentiation for all students

- Be user-friendly so that school administrators and classroom teachers will know what instruction should look like
- Include evidence that the quality of instruction is at a high level of rigor and teachers are using appropriate strategies for differentiating instruction for ELLs and building comprehension
- Indicate where specific lessons are in the pacing guide
- Articulate the level of rigor of student assignments and questions, and the level of student engagement.

The district might consider looking at "look fors" and classroom observation tools that incorporate ELL instructional strategies, developed by the St. Paul and Denver Public Schools.

F. Program and Student Placement

35. Conduct a thorough inventory of programs being used in ELL programs across all the schools and assess which ones should be kept and which ones discarded because of weak results or poor alignment. A review of ELL programs might include the following components:
 - A complete inventory of all ELL programs in schools, classified by program model and its respective level of implementation (fidelity) as determined by the New York State School Quality Review indicators, such as qualified staffing levels, school leadership support, instructional materials, etc.¹⁹
 - An analysis of ELL achievement data on each school, including disaggregated data on initial levels of English proficiency, other content-area indicators, and the relative growth of ELLs in the program over multiple years. The analysis should take into account the demographic make-up of the ELL population—diversity of languages, percentage of ELLs who are in special education, etc.
 - An examination of other programs and supports provided by the schools that may have an impact on the quality of ELL instruction. For example, if the school is in the superintendent's special district, it has additional staff and extended time for learning.
36. Develop a plan for minimizing the number of ELLs who attend schools that have no ELL programs and for providing ESL services ELLs at those schools. The plan might take into account alternative staffing assignments and opportunities to extend learning time for ELLs. For example, the plan could use itinerant ESL teachers, offer ELD instruction through after-school and summer programs, and offer tutoring through partnerships with community-based organizations.

¹⁹ A comprehensive list of indicators can be found in the School Quality Review documents prepared by the New York State Department of Education.

37. In cases where the school is large enough to accommodate large numbers of ELLs, design strategies that allow ELLs and the general population to interact on a regular basis. Such strategies could increase language interactions and improve English acquisition.
38. Develop a more formal process for coordinating between the Department of Multilingual Education and the Placement Office in making ELL placements throughout the school district
39. Charge the staff with developing a direct relationship with the New York State Bureau of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance (BRIA) to develop a process by which the Buffalo school district can better predict and project numbers of incoming ELL/refugee students and families.²⁰
40. Conduct a thorough review of the district's student registration process. An improved process might include:
 - Timely access to information for parents on the student registration process. In addition to improving its Web site, the district might hold information sessions or briefings for parents at geographically accessible locations and convenient times. Translation services and materials in the top five languages should be provided at these sessions.
 - A one-stop process—rather than a three-step process—by which ELLs can register for schools and programs. Consider providing authorizing and training LAC staff on how to finalize the ELL student placement process.
 - An expanded window or time frame at the beginning of the school year so parents can register new students (beyond a single day at the Convention Center). Students can currently register throughout the year, but if they miss the school choice deadline or the registration day at the beginning of the school year, then the selection of schools is significantly diminished.
 - A collaborative plan to maximize translation and interpretation services during the registration window. The district should consider working with community organizations and refugee agencies to expand the pool of translators and interpreters.
41. Develop a transparent policy and procedure for how ELLs are placed in schools and programs. The policy and procedures should be approved by the board and placed on the district's Website and made widely available at the placement and assessment center as well as schools. The procedure should include family-friendly policies such as ensuring that siblings are able to attend the same school.
42. Determine why and to what extent parents decline bilingual education services for their children. The district does not collect good data on this situation, but it would be helpful to know why it exists and what the trends are if the district is going to attract more families to participate.

²⁰ Bureau of Refugees and Immigrant Assistance, Thomas A. Hart, Director (518) 474-2975; Refugee Services Unit, Kristina Morelli (518) 402-3027; Administrative Support and Data Management, Larry Frank (518) 474-7209.

43. Name a high-level team led by the Department Multilingual Education to revamp the district's newcomer program, involving various refugee-settlement agencies and other community groups. A review might include

- Diagnostic and achievement data to provide an academic profile of newcomers—their prior academic knowledge, proficiency levels in English, age and grade level, and perhaps literacy in their native language. (The district might consult CUNY about the rubric that it recently developed for assessing prior knowledge among SIFE to determine if it might be helpful.)
- Customized graduation pathways towards graduation that are built around each student's specific academic profile, prior knowledge, and needed acceleration in programming to meet graduation requirements.
- Contextual information about prior experiences in their home country, as well as current living conditions to inform the district about the type of supports needed.
- An evaluation of the quality of the instructional program currently used at the newcomer centers and its ability to transition students into a regular school setting.
- An honest assessment of the buy-in and capacity of school leaders to implement a revamped newcomer program.

The newcomer center should emphasize accelerating the acquisition of English, as well as provide other supports to assist the students and their families in adjusting to a new home. Services could include the following components

- Expanded instruction and support services for newcomers entering the middle grades to provide an additional three to four years of intensive literacy development and vocabulary instruction.
- Intensive English development and literacy instruction aligned to New York State ESL standards.
- Appropriately aligned instructional materials that provide sufficient scaffolding and support for newcomers while also providing sufficient rigor to accelerate learning.
- Intensive vocabulary development consistent with what research calls for in developing adequate reading comprehension.
- Content-area instruction by qualified ESL-certified teachers to provide content-based English development.
- New or expanded alternative ways to grant credits (e.g., for math and science) to newcomer students to help them complete the required credits for graduation.

- Opportunities for newcomers to interact with native English-speakers to provide modeling of correct English usage and to foster cultural and global awareness.
- Acculturation and access to other support services that could ease the transition, in collaboration with external organizations.
- Service models that are flexible and suitable for older, newcomer students and their families. These students might have work and social responsibilities.
- Clear and specific criteria to exit the newcomer programs, based on achievement data and other considerations (related to acculturation and emotional adjustment) that do not prematurely push out students or unduly retain newcomers.
- Services to assist students in transitioning to general education classes

Achievement data on newcomer students should be tracked once they exit the newcomer program to ensure that they are able to succeed in the regular ELL programs and general education.

44. Evaluate the special education identification process among ELLs and develop a strategy to address problems. The review might look at these elements

- The high percentage of ELL special education students at Level I on the NYSELAT. It is important to ensure that the screening and evaluation process is adequate for low levels of English proficiency and is not erroneously classifying a developmentally “normal” second language acquisition stage as a disability.
- The high percentage of ELLs having a speech impairment or a learning disability
- The instructional interventions being used to ensure correct implementation for very low levels of English proficiency.
- The possibility of providing special education service in the students’ native language, other than Spanish, which is already provided.
- Staffing qualifications for the assessment of ELLs and provision of special education.

The review should build upon the district’s efforts already underway involving the development of a pre-referral packet to provide timely and linguistically appropriate interventions.

45. Specifically evaluate the effect of speech impairment services on ELLs. The district might consider monitoring more closely the progress of ELL special education students who receive speech therapy services. The evaluation might include performance indicators related the immediate effect of the intervention and re-classification, but it could also include longitudinal data to determine if ELLs served through the program are more successful than similar students in other interventions or programs.

46. Develop an improvement plan for the provision of services for ELLs with special needs. The plan ought to address the issue of extreme isolation of ELL/special education students in self-contained classes with low rates of progress in developing English proficiency. In developing the plan, the district might:
- Set clear academic targets for continuous progress and monitoring that progress.
 - Be explicit about how the central office would provide the necessary supports to ensure that program improvements take place.
 - Define necessary professional development related to both special education and second language acquisition
 - Evaluate the accommodations and/or modifications needed to improve the instructional program and materials aligned to the ESL standards for working with ELLs with special needs at the various proficiency levels of English.
47. Develop a strategy for increasing ELL graduation rates and incorporate this into the newly designed ELL strategic plan. According to the New York State accountability report, the overall dropout rate of 55 percent in the Buffalo school district exceeded the state dropout rate in 2008-09. And less than one-quarter of its ELLs graduate (21 percent). A plan might include:
- Data-triggers for ELLs in the district’s data warehouse that would warn principals and administrators about low attendance, achievement, course-taking sequences, and other drop-out predictors.
 - Timely interventions when triggers suggested a problem and clear accountability for principals and instructional leaders to lower rates.
48. Conduct an in-depth analysis of long-term ELLs to better understand the cohort and strengthen the ELL plan. The analysis should seek to further articulate the characteristics of this subgroup—their instructional experience, initial proficiency level, special education status, educational journey in the district, etc.

F. Data and Assessments

49. Strengthen the process by which student achievement data are used to modify instructional programs and professional development for ELLs. The district’s ability to use more data to drive ELL instruction is partly hampered by the numerous assessment tools used and the lack of data on ELLs. A first step might involve a comprehensive review of the interim assessments the district currently uses. The review might look for:
- Alignment of publisher-developed interim assessments and state standards in all content areas.
 - Alignment of publisher-developed interim assessments with the NYSESLAT.

- Predictive validity of all assessments with the state content assessments.
- Current use of results among education leadership and instructional staff (i.e., Are the data currently being used and what decisions are being made with it?).
- Accessibility of data on ELLs and the ability of school-based staff to use the data to inform instruction.

A second step might include assessing the kind of data on ELLs that the district has ready access to and develop that data if important elements are not accessible. For instance, data protocols should include guidance on how school teams could analyze ELL profiles related to programs, services, and progress in improving educational services.

A third step might include deciding which additional assessments are needed or which ones could be discarded. The district might:

- Develop clear guidelines or examples for how schools are expected to use student achievement data in their instructional decisions.
- Develop professional development for school-based and central office staff on the use of ELL data to inform instruction and on how to design targeted program supports based on that data.
- Consider providing a data analysis specialist to schools who could assist school leadership teams with retrieving and analyzing disaggregated data on ELLs.

A final step might involve developing supports for schools in interpreting and using ELL assessments to improve instruction for these students.

50. Create a data dashboard or profile on ELL academic status that the district and schools could use to monitor their academic progress. For example, grade-by-grade analysis of achievement data for ELLs might allow the district to identify district-level program adjustments. Student data at the school level might provide information for staff on how to further target academic support.
51. Establish a regular schedule and protocol for reporting ELL assessment results. The schedule and protocol might include:
 - All quarterly or interim test results disaggregated for ELLs. These would be distributed to the Department of Multilingual Education and respective content area departments (ELA, math, science, and social studies).
 - Analyses of ELL performance by item levels, strands or skills, disaggregated by school and distributed to senior staff (Department of Multilingual Education and Division of Teaching and Learning) and to school bilingual staff.

- Disaggregated results for ELLs in all data reports submitted to the school board and senior administrators.
 - Data that tracks the academic progress of students who have exited ESL and bilingual education programs.
 - Evaluations of the relative effects of ELL instructional models, length of time in program, and other instructional services provided to ELLs.
52. Develop and provide regular professional development on the interpretation and use of ELL performance data to inform instructional practice and decide on necessary content-area and English-language development strategies.
53. Develop an evaluation calendar for the all district reading and other intervention programs used to improve the academic achievement of ELLs. To assess effectiveness, the evaluations should specifically target academic results, instructional models, LAP, and length in program. Set up a regular process by which ELL instructional programming, professional development, interventions, and models are modified, based on the data and evaluation results.
54. Review and revamp the current data system for tracking ELL progress. The district currently uses a number of interim assessments, most developed by publishers, but because these assessments are not specifically aligned to the content or ESL standards of NYSESLAT, the state test, they may not be providing the necessary information to improve ELL achievement on NYSESLAT. The district should determine if the current interim assessments are adequately aligned and recommend a more streamlined process if necessary. Finally, the district might consider scaling back on pre-packaged interim assessments and developing assessments with greater predictive validity with NYSESLAT. With regard to ELLs, the district's interim assessments should be able to:
- Predict how ELLs will perform on the state assessments administered in the spring.
 - Evaluate the relative value of various programs and textbook adoptions.
 - Measure progress toward expected standards by the end of the school year.
 - Provide information for classroom teachers on where instruction needs to be modified before the end of the school year.

The district may want to consider whether its interim assessments (ACUITY) could be linked to the state assessments, as New York City has done, and consider the possibility of expanding the use of ACUITY beyond the special district schools.²¹

55. Develop a districtwide assessment guide for administering, interpreting, and using all the ELL assessments, including the NYSESLAT. The district currently issues memoranda and other guidelines about its assessments, but there is no comprehensive source that schools can

²¹ Houghton-Mifflin is the test publisher that worked to develop the interim assessments for NYC schools.

use to summarize ELL assessment procedures and interpretations, find links to standards, or use to modify instruction. Such a manual might include—

- Testing dates and their relation to one another, and links to state standards.
- Examples of how to use data to monitor ELL progress and inform instruction.
- Information on how the data analysis could be used to shape professional development.
- Procedures and rules for testing accommodations and exclusions for ELLs.

56. Identify and begin using valid Spanish proficiency assessments aligned to state standards. For ELLs and other students receiving instruction in Spanish, the data and assessment system should include a Spanish-language proficiency assessment to measure literacy for students in bilingual education or dual language immersion programs. Parents of English-speakers learning Spanish were very supportive of the dual language program but expressed frustration with not knowing how well their children were performing in Spanish. The district should explore the possibility of using the Spanish assessment developed for and used in New York City's program (*EL Sol*) or perhaps *Aprenda*.

G. Human Capital and Professional Development

57. Conduct an in-depth analysis of the district's staffing numbers and capacity to ensure that staff can implement the proposed changes in ELL programs. The analysis would include:

- Current staffing levels by ELL program models, by school, and by ELL enrollment by language.
- Staffing qualifications (of principals, teachers, and teacher assistants/aides), including elementary- and secondary-level endorsements, bilingual/ESL certification, native language proficiency and literacy, translation qualifications, and English proficiency.
- The capacity or relative strengths and weaknesses of school administrators to reform their ELL programs.
- The willingness to implement changes to refocus ELL programs.

58. Develop and send from the highest levels of the central office a districtwide message that all teachers need to acquire competencies in instructional strategies for ELLs and that professional development will be designed for all teachers. It is critical to incorporate English language development (ELD) strategies into the district's literacy plan, emphasizing the need for professional development for all teachers.

59. Explore options to expand the number of districtwide professional development days to accommodate ELD strategies. The district could pursue a targeted expansion of professional development days just for schools in the superintendent's special district, some of which have ELL programs.

60. Develop a protocol to begin evaluating the effects of professional development on ELL student achievement gains. Such evaluation should not be limited to ELL-related professional development but should include other literacy and content-area professional development. The evaluations should also assess how well teachers implement instructional strategies they learn in their professional development.
61. Incorporate language diversity issues in the professional development that teachers and staff receive on multicultural education.
62. Consider using more of the district's federal stimulus dollars to increase the number of teachers with dual certifications in bilingual education/ESL.
63. Consider overhauling the teacher hiring process to allow principals greater latitude to hire their own staff, including ELL staff. The district might consider developing a list of qualified ELL staff and teachers from which principals could choose.
64. Implement a tiered coaching and/or professional development strategy for schools where ELL program implementation was not strong or effective. The approach might include
 - Professional development and support at the various levels of the organization: senior level of central office, content area departments (coaches and support teachers), principals and school teams, general education and ESL/bilingual education teachers, and teacher assistants
 - Professional development on program implementation, support, and monitoring of ELL programs and accountability for ELL achievement.

Professional development for teachers might focus on ELL instructional strategies, differentiated instruction, the use of multiple materials, and alignment of instruction to ESL standards. The professional development for principals might include use of the "look fors" process and how to use the data that comes from it, school planning to create student groupings, teacher collaboration, and analysis of ELL data.
65. Provide specialized professional development to ELL coaches to strengthen their capacity to help teachers build student engagement in language-acquisition activities.
66. Consider coupling extended learning opportunities for ELLs with extra professional development for teachers through summer academies. The activities might include
 - Providing intensive academic-English development and enrichment activities for ELLs
 - Providing mentoring for ELL teachers during the summer academy and over the school year
 - Having students converse with each other as they work on joint projects, thus building ELL fluency and comprehension.

- Learning and applying ELL instructional strategies.
67. Provide more extensive professional development on the use of SIOP strategies in working with ELLs. It was unclear whether this training had been formally selected by the district or if it is only one of the many programs available in the district. There are a number of professional development programs for working with ELLs, and SIOP tends to show fairly consistent and positive results. Whatever program is selected, however, the district's professional development should
- Incorporate ELL-specific professional development into all district training efforts—for new teachers, content-area teachers, teacher aides, and professional development on new textbook adoptions.
 - Give incentives for participation in order to increase the numbers of teacher attending professional development sessions.
 - Provide the appropriate support and follow-up of SIOP or other training.
 - Build a cadre within the district to ensure that ongoing professional development can be provided in-house by teachers in the district.
68. Create a districtwide “grow your own” bilingual teacher program.
69. Provide ongoing professional development on ELL program models selected by the district. The fidelity of implementing these models will only be as good as the ongoing professional development on them. The Department of Multilingual Education should ensure that professional development is provided both on implementing the models and on any changes to the implementation that are made, based on ELL achievement data showing effects.
70. Ensure that instructional aides and assistants working with ELLs are provided ongoing professional development in order to better support instruction. The training should include how to assist teachers in building English-language development (ELD), the role of native language, and vocabulary. Both teachers and IAs should have training on how to work together on the instruction of ELLs.
71. Ensure that the newly hired 20 FTE teaching assistants to provide native-language support to students and to interpret for parents will receive intensive and ongoing training on second-language acquisition and native language support. This is a significant and welcome investment that requires support in order to result in significant achievement gains.
72. Update the district's professional development plan to include ongoing training on ELL instructional strategies, second-language acquisition strategies, vocabulary development, cooperative learning, and implementation of programs and observational tools. The plan should include cross-training of ESL teachers, administrators, content-area teachers, and coaches on differentiated instruction and other effective instructional strategies. The district might target the new professional development on schools in the superintendent's special district.

73. Strengthen the relations with local universities and colleges of education to create stronger partnerships and pre-service training that address the needs of ELLs. The district should consider focusing periodic meetings with local universities on the joint development of a “grow your own” bilingual education and ESL teachers. The district might look at how the Omaha City Public School district has developed an effective partnership with its universities relating to the professional development needs of its ESL teachers.
74. Strengthen current professional development for principals and teachers to ensure that ELLs are provided equal access to the core instructional program. The training should include a focus on how teachers could more effectively scaffold their instruction, use heterogeneity as an advantage, and know how and when to use modeling, grouping, and differentiated instruction.
75. Explore the possibility of using stipends as incentives for ESL/bilingual teachers to teach in targeted schools to improve ELL achievement. Consider offering stipends for ELL teachers to teach in the superintendent’s special district schools, and consider changing the deadline for announcing vacancies in order to fill the slots earlier in the year.
76. Incorporate the interpretation and use of data and data systems into district professional development and coaching models. The district has data and research staff members who are capable of providing or developing strong ELL data support to schools. To this end, the cross-functional team should develop a plan that includes data on completion rates and any “early-warning” triggers that are developed, as well as on former-ELLs and their academic status and progress.
77. The plan should also address
 - How the NYSESLAT aligns to the learning standards at the various proficiency levels and how instruction should be differentiated accordingly.
 - How to create special data analyses that address specific problems found in SURR schools and/ superintendent special district schools.
 - How to use data specialists to support principals, teachers, and coaches. The team may want to look at San Francisco’s Instructional Reform Facilitators and data analysis professional development as a model.

H. Parents and Community

78. Expand the district’s community outreach efforts to improve relations with various refugee, immigrant and language groups. The outreach group including many of these organizations as well as ELL parents, might also be useful in reviewing any Website changes, documents, and other district efforts.
 - Include the Department of Multilingual Education as an integral player in the outreach efforts and in its initiatives to strengthen communications in the language community.

- Consider creating translation and interpretation services that could be housed in the Department of Multilingual Education.
 - Establish a process by which parents can register different language concerns, suggestions or complaints with the district.
79. Draft a protocol for renewing and reactivating the district’s ELL parent advisory group. The reactivated group could be an invaluable tool for disseminating information about district ELL and other programs. It could also serve as a conduit of parent concerns and requests for information. Finally, it can serve to provide feedback as the district implements reforms to the ELL program.
80. Consider using some of the district’s stimulus funding to expand the capacity of the parent center.
81. Create a clear set of procedures for deciding which district or school documents are translated, how, and when, as well as when interpretations are provided—and who does them. At a minimum, the translated documents would include information on academic, program, and school requirements and procedures and on ELL program models. Many urban school systems house these services in a communications and/or community relations department. The district ought to consult with various community organizations, refugee and immigrant groups, and other social service agencies in establishing this kind of capacity and creating a steady funding stream for it.
82. Develop a communications improvement plan and a public information campaign that provides ongoing, accurate, and relevant information to the ELL community. The district group developing the plan might greatly benefit from including a cross-section of parents from the language and refugee communities at the outset. Elements of the plan might include
- Clear, complete, and accessible information regarding ELL sign-up procedures—registration, school choice process, application to magnet and exam schools, ELL program enrollment, etc.
 - A systemwide calendar in the top four or five languages of school application dates and other relevant ELL activities.
 - School-by-school information on achievement, programs, demographics, etc., to assist parents in making their selections.
 - Information dissemination strategies that go beyond electronic media and use print media, community organizations, and community and public access TV and radio.
 - Internal communications among staff and stakeholders about the district’s positive results and improvements, and staff responsibilities for presenting a fair and balanced description of the district and its efforts.

A well-crafted and targeted public information campaign would also allow the district to highlight its substantial improvements in instructional program and rising achievement scores. This might help the school district get the credit it deserves and generate stronger community support for the improvements still to come.

I. Funding and Compliance

83. Have the Department of Multilingual Education work with the finance department or federal programs department to review funding sources to support ELL programs. The district team should review current ELL resources and determine if there are sources of revenue that the district is not taking full advantage of. The funding structure currently used in the district might be enhanced in the following manner:

- **Level I—General Program Support.** *Foundation Aid* to support all general-operating expenditures such as instructional materials (textbook adoptions), ESL and bilingual education instructors, and ELL instructional models.
- **Level II--State Targeted Support for Improvement.** Dedicated *state funds* (Foundation Aid, Contract for Excellence, and Grants for English Language Learners) to support (1) ELL instruction and curriculum alignment work; (2) development of ELL-relevant modifications to curriculum and pacing guides; (3) ESL coaches to support teachers and (4) data resource specialists to support school teams.²² The state list of allowable activities to support quality programs for ELLs is extensive.
- **Level III--Federal targeted Support for Improvement.** *Title I schools* could support additional ESL and bilingual education and native-language instruction teachers to work with ELLs in smaller groups and collaboratively with general education teachers. Data analysis specialists, like those provided to Reading First schools, could also be supported or enhanced through professional development focused on ELLs. Funding could expand the district's extended learning opportunities already provided to ELLs, such as after-school, tutoring, and language academies on Saturday and in the summer. Title I set-aside funds for professional development, parental involvement, and SES might include ELL-specific strategies and services to enhance knowledge and competencies of the instructional staff, improve communication with ELL families, and assist ELLs in Title I schools in developing their academic English and content knowledge.
- **Level IV—Federal Targeted and Overall Support for Improvement (Title III).** *Title III funds* could support non-Title I schools with the same supplemental activities supported by Title I funds. At the districtwide level, Title III could support professional

²² The allowable activities are: a) Expand academic instruction time through extended school day, Saturday academies and tutoring; b) Expand student supports through guidance, mentoring and social support; c) Establish targeted services for ELL subpopulations, such as Students with Interrupted Formal Education, Immigrant Youth, Long-Term ELLs, and Special Education ELLs; d) Enhance learning resources and materials including technology and software; e) Reduce class sizes for ELLs including an ideal 15:1 qualified teacher ratio depending on grade and ELL concentration; f) Expand Pre-K and full-day Kindergarten opportunities with targeted ELL interventions; g) Provide ongoing professional development for all teachers on ELL methodologies; h) Strengthen planning, preparation, and support for ELL teachers; and i) Enhance parent engagement, family outreach, and community partnerships.

development targeted on ELL instruction and support teams for schools, supplemental classes for newcomer students to complete high school, and Saturday academies and other language academies during the summer. Finally, IDEA funds could be used to support joint professional development efforts and services with the Department of Multilingual Education.

84. Design the membership and roles of Title I/ELL support teams that could assist schools with using Title I and Title III funds strategically and ensuring that the needs of ELLs are built into school improvement plans required under the law.
85. Consider using some Title I stimulus funds to help redesign the district's bilingual education, ESL, and other programs for ELLs.

CHAPTER 6. SYNOPSIS AND DISCUSSION

The Buffalo school system has made enormous strides since the Council of the Great City Schools conducted its first review of the district 10 years ago. It has accelerated that progress in the last several years with strong leadership and a better instructional system that is clearly capable of raising student achievement. The results are evident in the gains in state test scores in both reading and math.

The school board and administration have now turned their attention to the performance of English language learners (ELLs) in Buffalo. This group makes up only about 9 percent of the district's enrollment, but it is growing substantially. In addition, the overall performance of ELLs is not progressing as well as general performance in the district.

Because of concerns about this lower academic performance, the district's school board developed and approved an important and forward-looking policy for ELLs. The policy clearly articulates a priority on improving the achievement of these students and providing them full access to the district's general instructional program.

In response to these concerns, the district's leadership has retained a skilled and committed director of language programs to work with the school system's talented chief academic officer on improving services for these students. Programs have begun to improve, and results are evident for ELLs in the early elementary grades. After that, however, these students do very poorly academically and often leave school early without the requisite skills to be successful.

The problem appears to be that the general instructional program is showing progress for most students but is too poorly defined for English-language learners. The program is inconsistently implemented, it misses a considerable number of students, and it often reflects very low expectations. In addition, services for English language learners appear to be conceived and delivered as if they were remedial services.

The Council's team of experts made a number of important observations. More than anything else, however, it was clear to the Council's team that English-language learners simply did not have adequate access to the core instructional program of the school district. For the most part, ELLs were often separately served or were served in a way that did not build academic vocabulary, comprehension skills, or English-language acquisition skills. There appeared to be an assumption that the basic literacy program in the district would take care of the instructional needs of these students.

Visits to classrooms often revealed teaching at very low levels in classrooms where there were large numbers of English-language learners. Or ELLs were pulled out of classes where instruction was occurring in core subjects in order to receive language supports.

Second, it was clear that professional development was inadequate for both general education and bilingual education teachers in differentiating instruction and using the materials and models that the district has designed. The district did not have the data on English-language

learners that would help inform their instruction, shape the professional development for their teachers, or serve to modify programs that were not producing results. And there was no strong system of accountability among staff or teachers if these students were not doing well.

Third, it was clear that the district's capacity to serve English-language learners was not well integrated organizationally into the school system's instructional operations. One of the conclusions that Council research teams have come to over the years is that language services for this student group need to be well coordinated with and integrated into the broader instructional program of a district if academic achievement is to improve. It is also important that districts have a clearly articulated language development strategy, something that the Buffalo school district appears to lack.

Districts with strong ELL academic achievement share certain characteristics:

1. They have a clear plan for the faithful and regular implementation of programs meant to serve students and that there be a logic behind who gets what services, in what amounts, and what times.
2. They have a culture of shared accountability for results with this student group, and they staff their schools strategically around the programs and services that are needed, rather than defining the services around who is available at any given school.
3. These components are coupled with a strong, ongoing, and coherent professional development program that builds the capacity of staff—both bilingual and general education—to improve instructional services for students.
4. They use their data to inform the instructional program with ELLs and the allocation of personnel and resources.

The Buffalo public schools lack many of these key ingredients to improving the academic achievement of English language learners. However, the Council and its team of language experts have fashioned a set of recommendations and proposals that we believe will improve the language programs in the district and make them more consistent with urban school systems that are showing progress with these students. Most important in those recommendations is a complete re-conceptualization of the district's current remedial approach to language issues and how they are addressed in the district.

The school district has already taken the most important step: It has asked for assistance and for the critical input of other cities that have faced some of the same challenges. It was very clear to the Council and its team that the Buffalo public school district and its leadership are determined to make things better for English language learners in the city, improve their achievement, and welcome them into the community. We hope this report will help make that happen.

APPENDIX A. HISTORY OF LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY IN BUFFALO

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Language Diversity in the City of Buffalo, NY

Since the early 1800s, the City of Buffalo has been the home of immigrants and citizens whose first language is not English. The linguistically diverse population, however, has remained a relatively small percentage of the total population in the city. According to the 2006-08 American Community Survey (ACS) Three-Year Estimates, of the total population of 260,000 inhabitants aged five and older, only 12 percent spoke a language other than English at home. Fifty-four percent of these individuals spoke Spanish, and 46 percent spoke some other language.²³

According to the ACS data for 2006-08, Buffalo's ethnic diversity that is typically associated with linguistic variation was 9 percent Latino/Hispanic, 2 percent Asian, and 1.3 American Indian/Alaska Native. The Census survey does not disaggregate Black/African American numbers to determine the percentage of this group that spoke an African language.

The American Community Survey indicated that close to 23,000 Hispanics originating from Puerto Rico, Mexico, and Cuba lived in Buffalo, with the largest Spanish-speaking group (81 percent) being Puerto Rican.

Latinos and Chinese—An Early Presence

Buffalo has had Spanish-speaking residents since the late 1800s. The 1880 census lists 16 Buffalo residents who immigrated from Spain; three each from Mexico, South America, and Central America; and four from Cuba. Immigration from Spain increased substantially in 1864 and 1865. In addition, Spanish-speaking Mexicans came to Buffalo as part of the U.S.-sponsored Bracero Program (a response to the World War II manpower shortage) to fill jobs left vacant by men leaving for the service. They worked as braceros to maintain the railroad lines; filled jobs in the steel plants, factories, and mills; and worked as migrant farm labor. The Mexican community declined in numbers, however, after the war when servicemen returned and many Mexicans lost their jobs. The Spanish-speaking population also dwindled when Buffalo's economy began to slide after the War. Many mills were closed, and greater opportunities were seen in Chicago and other major cities.

In the 1950s, when the number of Mexicans in Buffalo fell significantly, the number of Puerto Ricans increased rapidly. During that period, most Puerto Ricans arrived first as migrant labor, traveling back and forth from their island home to the Buffalo area during the growing season. Freedom of movement between Puerto Rico and the U.S. mainland was easy because Puerto Ricans became U.S. Citizens when the United States granted it commonwealth status in 1952. Puerto Rican families began to settle in Buffalo as they found more stable jobs with such companies as New York Central Railroad, Bethlehem Steel, Pillsbury flour mills, and other factories including Ford and Chevrolet.

²³ Buffalo City, New York. Population and Housing Narrative Profile: 2006-08. 2006-08 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates.

Initially, during the 1950s and 1960s, Puerto Ricans and other Latinos held mostly menial jobs in the mills, the railroad and assembly plants, due to language barriers, lower educational attainment, and discrimination. Today, Puerto Ricans work at all levels of employment and the professions, and the Hispanic community in general has become well established in the Lower West Side of Buffalo, South Buffalo, and Lackawanna.

During this period when Puerto Ricans were settling more permanently into the area, they were instrumental in forming such organizations as the Borinquen Club and the Latin American Democratic Club. Unfortunately, covert discrimination took a toll on their organizing efforts, both political and social. In 1967, for instance, the group made arrangements to rent a hall for their annual Hispanic Coronation Dance but were advised that the hall was "permanently booked" and their deposit was returned.

In the late 1970s the Puerto Rican American Community Association (PRACA) was organized as a nonprofit organization to apply for grants and provide needed human services to the Latino community. Then, students and administrators from the State University of New York at Buffalo, formed the Puerto Rican-Chicano Committee (PRCC) to respond to the community and address issues of housing, education, employment, criminal justice, and health. In 1986, the three largest social service agencies (PRACA, PRCC, and La Alternativa) merged to form the Hispanos Unidos de Búfalo (HUB). HUB is a nonprofit agency that serves the residents of Buffalo's West Side and the Hispanic communities of Buffalo and Erie County. The organization works with and on behalf of the Hispanic community in employment, affordable housing, educational opportunities, health care, and mental health. In addition, the organization provides cultural activities and encourages Hispanic participation in the political and social life of Buffalo.

Chinese

Similar to the first Spanish-speaking immigrants, Chinese immigrants began settling in the Buffalo area during the 1800s. The first Chinese residents of Buffalo established Chinese laundries and restaurants. By 1902, U.S. federal law severely limited the number of Chinese immigrants, and the numbers were cut almost in half. Despite the small numbers and slow growth, the Chinese community built a presence with 40 Chinese laundries in Cold Spring, Black Rock, South and East Buffalo, and with Chinese restaurants on Michigan Street, Broadway, Oak Street, and William Street. By 1930, they had established a Chinese Merchants' Association, and by the 1950s a Chinese Club was formed and members met regularly at the International Institute.

In 1927, Buffalo enrolled about 33 Chinese students in its elementary schools. By the 1980s, two distinctly Chinese schools were established. One school opened in 1981, connected with the Chinese Christian Church, and another opened in 1986 that was affiliated with the Chinese Club of Western New York (CCWNY). These schools began in response to community's need for children to learn Chinese. The Chinese Club of Western New York serves some 280 Chinese families from Mainland China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. The school teaches both a simplified Chinese written language and a more traditional written language. The Club

also serves as a focal point for important cultural celebrations and it provides information about Chinese history and culture.²⁴

Refugee Resettlement and Immigration

Despite Buffalo's early history as a Gateway City and despite its many waves of immigration and refugees, the ACS 2006-08 report estimated that only 5 percent of the city's total population was foreign born. Buffalo saw an increase in numbers of refugees and immigrants from Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War, and by the 2000 Census the data showed that nearly 2,000 Vietnamese lived in Erie County. Some Vietnamese business-owners believe the numbers to be closer to 5,000 in Buffalo alone.

Finally, Buffalo has four resettlement agencies that assist refugees making the transition to the United States: the Journey's End Refugee Services, Catholic Charities, the International Institute of Buffalo, and the Jewish Family Service. The federal government pays these agencies to assist refugees and help them find employment. The numbers and diversity of groups served by Journey's End suggest that the linguistic diversity of Buffalo is on the rise, with the city welcoming refugees from Afghanistan, Burma, Burundi, Cambodia, Cuba, Ethiopia, Iran, Iraq, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, and Sudan.

According to the New York State Bureau of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance (BRIA), a shift in the origins of immigrants began four years ago as new arrivals began to come to Buffalo rather than New York City. For example, in FY 2008, a total of 3,632 refugees resettled in New York State—87 percent of whom resettled in Upstate New York. The top eight countries from which refugees have come are located in four regions.²⁵

- Asia (Burma and Bhutan), accounting for 66 percent of arrivals
- The former Soviet Union, particularly the Ukraine, accounts for 3 percent of all arrivals
- African countries (Burundi, Somalia, Liberia) 9 percent
- Middle East (Iraq and Afghanistan) 11 percent.

²⁴ Source: http://www.archives.nysed.gov/projects/legacies/leg_buf.shtml New York State Archives. Legacies Project. Accessed January 2, 2010. Buffalo Architecture and History. <http://www.buffaloah.com/h/hisp/hisp.html>. Accessed January 2, 2010.

²⁵ New York State Bureau of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance. <http://www.otda.state.ny.us/main/bria/> (Accessed January 15, 2009)

APPENDIX B. AYP STATUS OF SCHOOLS WITH ELL ENROLLMENT

APPENDIX B. AYP STATUS OF SCHOOLS WITH ELL ENROLLMENT

2007-08 Schools with ELL Enrollment		#	% of	AYP Status	
Sch#	School	of ELLs	ELLs	2007-08	2008-09
#0540	Dr G. Blackman Sch Of Exc #054	2		G	G
#0650	Roosevelt ECC #065	2		G	G
#0560	Frederick Law Olmsted Sch #056	2		G	G
#0660	North Park Middle Academy	5		G	G
#0810	Buffalo Public School #081	6		G	G
#1970	Math Science Technology Prep	12		G	G
#0640	Frederick Law Olmsted Nor #064	24		G	G
#0360	Bilingual E.C.C. #036	134		G	G
#0030	D'Youville Porter Campus	220		G	G
	Subtotal	407	14%	9	9
#0320	Bennett Park Montessori School	2		I-1	I-1
#0820	Early Childhood Center #082 (08-09)	1		I-1	I-1
#0170	Early Childhood Center #017	2		I-1	I-2
#0950	Waterfront ES	82		I-2	CA
#0180	Dr. Antonia Pantoja Sch Ac Exc	180		I-2	I-2
	Subtotal	267	9%	5	
#0390	MLK-Multicultural Inst.(08-09)	1		CA	RP
#0910	B.U.I.L.D. Academy (08-09)	1		CA	CA
#0720	Lorraine Elementary	3		CA	G
#1920	Buffalo Academy for Arts	10		CA	I-1
#0330	Bilingual Center #33	213		CA	RP
	Subtotal	228	8%	5	
#0900	Dr. C. R. Drew Sci Magnet ECC 090	1		RP	R-1
#0960	Campus West School	44		RP	R-1
#0610	Early Childhood Center #061	1		RP	G
#0430	Lovejoy Discovery School #43	2		R-1	R-2
#0790	Pfc. W. J. Grabiarz Sch Of Exc	6		R-1	R-2
#0990	Stanley M. Makowski E.C.C.	55		R-1	R-1
#0190	Native American Magnet School	92		R-1	R-1
#0760	Herman Badillo Bilingual Academy	251		R-1	R-1
#0450	International School	492		R-1	R-2
#0370	Futures Academy	3		R-2	R-3
#0930	Southside ES	37		R-2	R-3
#0060	Buffalo ES of Technology	64		R-2	R-3

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#2020	Grover Cleveland HS	175		R-2	R-3
#0110	Poplar Citizenship Academy	1		R-3	R-3
#3010	Burgard HS	16		R-3	R-4
#0940	West Hertel Academy	71		R-3	R-4
#0300	Frank A Sedita Academy	360		R-3	R-1
	Subtotal	1671	59%	17	
	Subtotal in I, CA, Restructuring	2166	77%	27	
	Total ELLs in 2007-08	2827			

Key:

G= Good Standing;
 I-# = Improvement-Year,
 CA = Corrective Action,
 RP= Planning for Restructuring
 R-# = Restructuring-Year (per
 the state)

Total ELL Enrollment in 2007-08
2,827

APPENDIX C. ENGLISH PROFICIENCY ANALYSES

APPENDIX C. ENGLISH PROFICIENCY ANALYSES

New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test—Two-Year Cohort						
	2007 - 2008		2008 - 2009		Delta	
<i>Performance</i>	Student		Student		Student	
<i>Level</i>	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Proficient	N/A	N/A	194	10.3	194	10.3
Advanced	576	30.7	641	34.1	65	3.5
Intermediate	684	36.4	653	34.8	(31)	(1.6)
Beginning	619	32.9	391	20.8	(228)	(12.1)
Total Students	1879	100.0	1879	100.0		
Two-Year Cohort Value-Add Percentage						
2007 - 2008 to 2008 - 2009						
	<i>from \ to</i>	Proficient	Advanced	Intermediate	Beginning	
	Advanced	7.8	18.1	4.6	0.2	
	Intermediate	2.3	13.1	18.5	2.4	
	Beginning	0.2	2.9	11.6	18.2	
<i>Summary</i>	Value Add	%No Change	%One Level	%Two Levels	%Three Levels	
%Regressed	7.2		7.1	0.2	N/A	
%No Change	54.8	54.8				
%Progressed	37.9		32.5	5.3	0.2	
			<i>net weighted impact metric</i>			
			positive	36.2		

Note: The cohort consists of students that scored Beginning, Intermediate or, Advanced in 2006 and Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced, or Proficient in 2007. If Not Specified or No Valid Score in 2006 or 2007 then not part of the cohort. If a student scored Proficient in 2006, he/she is considered having tested out for 2007. The cohort size of 1,879 is significant.

Raising the Achievement of English Learners in the Buffalo Public Schools

New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test—Three-Year Cohort						
	2005 – 2006		2007 - 2008		Delta	
<i>Performance Level</i>	Student		Student		Student	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Proficient	N/A	N/A	126	11.6	126	11.6
Advanced	351	32.3	432	39.8	81	7.5
Intermediate	415	38.2	365	33.6	(50)	(4.6)
Beginning	320	29.5	163	15.0	(157)	(14.5)
Total Students	1086	100.0	1086	100.0		
Three-Year Cohort Value-Add Percentage						
2005 - 2006 to 2007 - 2008						
	<i>from</i> <i>to</i>	Proficient	Advanced	Intermediate	Beginning	
	Advanced	8.2	18.3	5.3	0.5	
	Intermediate	3.0	17.4	15.6	2.2	
	Beginning	0.4	4.1	12.7	12.3	
Summary	Value Add	%No Change	%One Level	%Two Levels	%Three Levels	
%Regressed	8.0		7.6	0.5	N/A	
%No Change	46.2	46.2				
%Progressed	45.8		38.3	7.1	0.4	
			<i>net weighted impact metric</i>			
			positive	45.1		

Note: The cohort consists of students that scored Beginning, Intermediate, or Advanced in 2006 and Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced, or Proficient in 2008. They also had a score of Beginning, Intermediate, or Advanced in 2007. If Not Specified or No Valid Score in 2006, 2007 or 2008 then not part of the cohort. If a student scored Proficient in 2006 or 2007, he/she is considered having tested out for 2008. The cohort size of 1,086 is significant.

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New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test—Four-Year Cohort						
	2005 - 2006		2008 - 2009		Delta	
<i>Performance</i>	Student		Student		Student	
<i>Level</i>	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Proficient	N/A	N/A	117	15.2	117	15.2
Advanced	210	27.3	301	39.2	91	11.8
Intermediate	293	38.2	261	34.0	(32)	(4.2)
Beginning	265	34.5	89	11.6	(176)	(22.9)
Total Students	768	100.0	768	100.0		
Four-Year Cohort Value-Add Percentage						
2005 - 2006 to 2008 - 2009						
	<i>from \ to</i>	Proficient	Advanced	Intermediate	Beginning	
	Advanced	8.9	13.5	4.6	0.4	
	Intermediate	5.6	16.7	14.3	1.6	
	Beginning	0.8	9.0	15.1	9.6	
<i>Summary</i>	Value Add	%No Change	%One Level	%Two Levels	%Three Levels	
%Regressed	6.5		6.1	0.4	N/A	
%No Change	37.5	37.5				
%Progressed	56.0		40.6	14.6	0.8	
			<i>net weighted impact metric</i>			
			positive	65.2		

Note: The cohort consists of students that scored Beginning, Intermediate, or Advanced in 2006 and Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced, or Proficient in 2009. They also had a score of Beginning, Intermediate, or Advanced in 2007 and 2008. If Not Specified or No Valid Score in 2006, 2007, 2008, or 2009 then not part of the cohort. If a student scored Proficient in 2006, 2007, or 2008, he/she is considered having tested out for 2009. The cohort size of 768 is significant.

Raising the Achievement of English Learners in the Buffalo Public Schools

New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test—Four-Year Bilingual Education Cohort						
	2005 - 2006		2008 - 2009		Delta	
<i>Performance</i>	Student		Student		Student	
<i>Level</i>	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Proficient	N/A	N/A	35	10.3	35	10.3
Advanced	92	27.1	140	41.3	48	14.2
Intermediate	118	34.8	114	33.6	(4)	(1.2)
Beginning	129	38.1	50	14.7	(79)	(23.3)
Total Students	339	100.0	339	100.0		
Four-Year Bilingual Education Cohort Value-Add Percentage						
2005 - 2006 to 2008 - 2009						
	<i>from to</i>	Proficient	Advanced	Intermediate	Beginning	
	Advanced	6.8	14.5	5.3	0.6	
	Intermediate	2.7	15.6	14.5	2.1	
	Beginning	0.9	11.2	13.9	12.1	
Summary	Value Add	%No Change	%One Level	%Two Levels	%Three Levels	
%Regressed	8.0		7.4	0.6	N/A	
%No Change	41.0	41.0				
%Progressed	51.0		36.3	13.9	0.9	
			<i>net weighted impact metric</i>			
			positive	58.1		

Note: The cohort consists of bilingual education program students that scored Beginning, Intermediate, or Advanced in 2006 and Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced, or Proficient in 2009. They also had a score of Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced, or Proficient in 2007 and 2008. If Not Specified or No Valid Score in 2006, 2007, 2008, or 2009, then not part of the cohort. If a student scored Proficient in 2006, 2007, or 2008, he/she is considered having tested out for 2009. The cohort size of 339 is significant.

Raising the Achievement of English Learners in the Buffalo Public Schools

New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test—Four-Year Freestanding ESL Cohort						
	2005 - 2006		2008 - 2009		Delta	
<i>Performance</i>	Student		Student		Student	
<i>Level</i>	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Proficient	N/A	N/A	73	19.7	73	19.7
Advanced	96	25.9	139	37.6	43	11.6
Intermediate	146	39.5	123	33.2	(23)	(6.2)
Beginning	128	34.6	35	9.5	(93)	(25.1)
Total Students	370	100.0	370	100.0		
Four-Year Freestanding ESL Cohort Value-Add Percentage						
2005 - 2006 to 2008 - 2009						
	<i>from \ to</i>	Proficient	Advanced	Intermediate	Beginning	
	Advanced	10.3	12.2	3.2	0.3	
	Intermediate	8.6	17.3	12.7	0.8	
	Beginning	0.8	8.1	17.3	8.4	
Summary	Value Add	%No Change	%One Level	%Two Levels	%Three Levels	
%Regressed	4.3		4.1	0.3	N/A	
%No Change	33.2	33.2				
%Progressed	62.4		44.9	16.8	0.8	
			<i>net weighted impact metric</i>			
			positive	76.2		

Note: The cohort consists of Freestanding ESL program students that scored Beginning, Intermediate, or Advanced in 2006 and Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced, or Proficient in 2009. They also had a score of Beginning, Intermediate or Advanced in 2007 and 2008. If Not Specified or No Valid Score in 2006, 2007, 2008, or 2009, then not part of the cohort. If a student scored Proficient in 2006, 2007, or 2008, he/she is considered having tested out for 2009. The cohort size of 370 is significant.

Raising the Achievement of English Learners in the Buffalo Public Schools

New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test—Four-Year Hispanic or Latino Cohort						
	2005 - 2006		2008 - 2009		Delta	
<i>Performance Level</i>	Student		Student		Student	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Proficient	N/A	N/A	60	12.2	60	12.2
Advanced	153	31.2	198	40.4	45	9.2
Intermediate	184	37.6	169	34.5	(15)	(3.1)
Beginning	153	31.2	63	12.9	(90)	(18.4)
Total Students	490	100.0	490	100.0		
Four-Year Hispanic or Latino Cohort Value-Add Percentage						
2005 - 2006 to 2008 - 2009						
	<i>from \ to</i>	Proficient	Advanced	Intermediate	Beginning	
	Advanced	8.2	16.1	6.3	0.6	
	Intermediate	3.5	15.3	16.5	2.2	
	Beginning	0.6	9.0	11.6	10.0	
Summary	Value Add	%No Change	%One Level	%Two Levels	%Three Levels	
%Regressed	9.2		8.6	0.6	N/A	
%No Change	42.7	42.7				
%Progressed	48.2		35.1	12.4	0.6	
			<i>net weighted impact metric</i>			
			positive	52.0		

Note: The cohort consists of Hispanic or Latino students that scored Beginning, Intermediate, or Advanced in 2006 and Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced, or Proficient in 2009. They also had a score of Beginning, Intermediate, or Advanced in 2007 and 2008. If Not Specified or No Valid Score in 2006, 2007, 2008, or 2009, then not part of the cohort. If a student scored Proficient in 2006, 2007, or 2008, he/she is considered having tested out for 2009. The cohort size of 490 is significant.

Raising the Achievement of English Learners in the Buffalo Public Schools

New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test—Four-Year Black or African American Cohort						
	2005 - 2006		2008 - 2009		Delta	
<i>Performance Level</i>	Student		Student		Student	
<i>Level</i>	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Proficient	N/A	N/A	23	13.7	23	13.7
Advanced	21	12.5	58	34.5	37	22.0
Intermediate	65	38.7	65	38.7	0	0.0
Beginning	82	48.8	22	13.1	(60)	(35.7)
Total Students	168	100.0	168	100.0		
Four-Year Black or African American Cohort Value-Add Percentage						
2005 - 2006 to 2008 - 2009						
	<i>from to</i>	Proficient	Advanced	Intermediate	Beginning	
	Advanced	5.4	7.1	0.0	0.0	
	Intermediate	8.3	18.5	11.3	0.6	
	Beginning	0.0	8.9	27.4	12.5	
Summary	Value Add	%No Change	%One Level	%Two Levels	%Three Levels	
%Regressed	0.6		0.6	0.0	N/A	
%No Change	31.0	31.0				
%Progressed	68.5		51.2	17.3	0.0	
			<i>net weighted impact metric</i>			
			positive	85.1		

Note: The cohort consists of black or African American students that scored Beginning, Intermediate, or Advanced in 2006 and Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced, or Proficient in 2009. They also had a score of Beginning, Intermediate, or Advanced in 2007 and 2008. If Not Specified or No Valid Score in 2006, 2007, 2008, or 2009 then not part of the cohort. If a student scored Proficient in 2006, 2007, or 2008 then they are considered having tested out for 2009. The cohort size of 168 is significant.

Raising the Achievement of English Learners in the Buffalo Public Schools

New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test—Four-Year Spanish Cohort						
	2005 - 2006		2008 - 2009		Delta	
<i>Performance</i>	Student		Student		Student	
<i>Level</i>	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Proficient	N/A	N/A	62	12.5	62	12.5
Advanced	154	31.1	200	40.4	46	9.3
Intermediate	187	37.8	170	34.3	(17)	(3.4)
Beginning	154	31.1	63	12.7	(91)	(18.4)
Total Students	495	100.0	495	100.0		
Four-Year Spanish Cohort Value-Add Percentage						
2005 - 2006 to 2008 - 2009						
	<i>from \ to</i>	Proficient	Advanced	Intermediate	Beginning	
	Advanced	8.3	16.0	6.3	0.6	
	Intermediate	3.6	15.6	16.4	2.2	
	Beginning	0.6	8.9	11.7	9.9	
<i>Summary</i>	Value Add	%No Change	%One Level	%Two Levels	%Three Levels	
%Regressed	9.1		8.5	0.6	N/A	
%No Change	42.2	42.2				
%Progressed	48.7		35.6	12.5	0.6	
			<i>net weighted impact metric</i>			
			positive	52.7		

Note: The cohort consists of 2006 Spanish home language students that scored Beginning, Intermediate, or Advanced in 2006 and Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced, or Proficient in 2009. They also had a score of Beginning, Intermediate, or Advanced in 2007 and 2008. If Not Specified or No Valid Score in 2006, 2007, 2008 or 2009 then not part of the cohort. If a student scored Proficient in 2006, 2007, or 2008, he/she is considered having tested out for 2009. The cohort size of 495 is significant.

Raising the Achievement of English Learners in the Buffalo Public Schools

New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test—Four-Year Somali Cohort						
	2005 - 2006		2008 - 2009		Delta	
<i>Performance</i>	Student		Student		Student	
<i>Level</i>	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Proficient	N/A	N/A	10	8.8	10	8.8
Advanced	11	9.7	34	30.1	23	20.4
Intermediate	38	33.6	48	42.5	10	8.8
Beginning	64	56.6	21	18.6	(43)	(38.1)
Total Students	113	100.0	113	100.0		
Four-Year Somali Cohort Value-Add Percentage						
2005 - 2006 to 2008 - 2009						
	<i>from \ to</i>	Proficient	Advanced	Intermediate	Beginning	
	Advanced	2.7	7.1	0.0	0.0	
	Intermediate	6.2	17.7	9.7	0.0	
	Beginning	0.0	5.3	32.7	18.6	
Summary	Value Add	%No Change	%One Level	%Two Levels	%Three Levels	
%Regressed	0.0		0.0	0.0	N/A	
%No Change	35.4	35.4				
%Progressed	64.6		53.1	11.5	0.0	
			<i>net weighted impact metric</i>			
			positive	76.1		

Note: The cohort consists of 2006 Somali home language students that scored Beginning, Intermediate, or Advanced in 2006 and Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced, or Proficient in 2009. They also had a score of Beginning, Intermediate, or Advanced in 2007 and 2008. If Not Specified or No Valid Score in 2006, 2007, 2008, or 2009, then not part of the cohort. If a student scored Proficient in 2006, 2007, or 2008, he/she is considered having tested out for 2009. The cohort size of 113 is significant.

Raising the Achievement of English Learners in the Buffalo Public Schools

New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test—Four-Year Male Cohort						
	2005 - 2006		2008 - 2009		Delta	
<i>Performance Level</i>	<i>Student</i>		<i>Student</i>		<i>Student</i>	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Proficient	N/A	N/A	63	15.1	63	15.1
Advanced	102	24.5	142	34.1	40	9.6
Intermediate	151	36.3	150	36.1	(1)	(0.2)
Beginning	163	39.2	61	14.7	(102)	(24.5)
Total	416	100.0	416	100.0		
Four-Year Male Cohort Value-Add Percentage						
2005 - 2006 to 2008 - 2009						
	<i>from</i> <i>to</i>	Proficient	Advanced	Intermediate	Beginning	
	Advanced	8.2	10.8	5.3	0.2	
	Intermediate	5.8	14.4	14.2	1.9	
	Beginning	1.2	8.9	16.6	12.5	
<i>Summary</i>	Value Add	%No Change	%One Level	%Two Levels	%Three Levels	
%Regressed	7.5		7.2	0.2	N/A	
%No Change	37.5	37.5				
%Progressed	55.0		39.2	14.7	1.2	
			<i>net weighted impact metric</i>			
			positive	64.4		

Note: The cohort consists of male students that scored Beginning, Intermediate, or Advanced in 2006 and Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced, or Proficient in 2009. They also had a score of Beginning, Intermediate, or Advanced in 2007 and 2008. If Not Specified or No Valid Score in 2006, 2007, 2008, or 2009 then not part of the cohort. If a student scored Proficient in 2006, 2007, or 2008, he/is is considered having tested out for 2009. The cohort size of 416 is significant.

Raising the Achievement of English Learners in the Buffalo Public Schools

New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test—Four-Year Female Cohort						
Performance Level	2005 – 2006		2008 - 2009		Delta	
	Student		Student		Student	
Level	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Proficient	N/A	N/A	53	15.2	53	15.2
Advanced	107	30.7	159	45.6	52	14.9
Intermediate	142	40.7	111	31.8	(31)	(8.9)
Beginning	100	28.7	26	7.4	(74)	(21.2)
Total Students	349	100.0	349	100.0		
Four-Year Female Cohort Value-Add Percentage						
2005 - 2006 to 2008 - 2009						
	<i>from</i> <i>to</i>	Proficient	Advanced	Intermediate	Beginning	
	Advanced	9.5	16.9	3.7	0.6	
	Intermediate	5.4	19.5	14.6	1.1	
	Beginning	0.3	9.2	13.5	5.7	
Summary	Value Add	%No Change	%One Level	%Two Levels	%Three Levels	
%Regressed	5.4		4.9	0.6	N/A	
%No Change	37.2	37.2				
%Progressed	57.3		42.4	14.6	0.3	
			<i>net weighted impact metric</i>			
			positive	66.5		

Note: The cohort consists of female students that scored Beginning, Intermediate, or Advanced in 2006 and Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced, or Proficient in 2009. They also had a score of Beginning, Intermediate, or Advanced in 2007 and 2008. If Not Specified or No Valid Score in 2006, 2007, 2008, or 2009, then not part of the cohort. If a student scored Proficient in 2006, 2007, or 2008, he/she is considered having tested out for 2009. The cohort size of 349 is significant.

Raising the Achievement of English Learners in the Buffalo Public Schools

New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test—Four-Year Special Education Cohort						
	2005 - 2006		2008 - 2009		Delta	
<i>Performance</i>	Student		Student		Student	
<i>Level</i>	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Proficient	N/A	N/A	13	6.6	13	6.6
Advanced	25	12.6	53	26.8	28	14.1
Intermediate	81	40.9	84	42.4	3	1.5
Beginning	92	46.5	48	24.2	(44)	(22.2)
Total Students	198	100.0	198	100.0		
Four-Year Special Education Cohort Value-Add Percentage						
2005 - 2006 to 2008 - 2009						
	<i>from \ to</i>	Proficient	Advanced	Intermediate	Beginning	
	Advanced	2.5	6.6	3.5	0.0	
	Intermediate	3.5	11.1	22.2	4.0	
	Beginning	0.5	9.1	16.7	20.2	
<i>Summary</i>	Value Add	%No Change	%One Level	%Two Levels	%Three Levels	
	7.6		7.6	0.0	N/A	
	49.0	49.0				
	43.4		30.3	12.6	0.5	
			<i>net weighted impact metric</i>			
			positive	49.5		

Note: The cohort consists of special education students that scored Beginning, Intermediate, or Advanced in 2006 and Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced, or Proficient in 2009. They also had a score of Beginning, Intermediate, or Advanced in 2007 and 2008. If Not Specified or No Valid Score in 2006, 2007, 2008, or 2009, then not part of the cohort. If a student scored Proficient in 2006, 2007, or 2008, he/she is considered having tested out for 2009. The cohort size of 198 is significant.

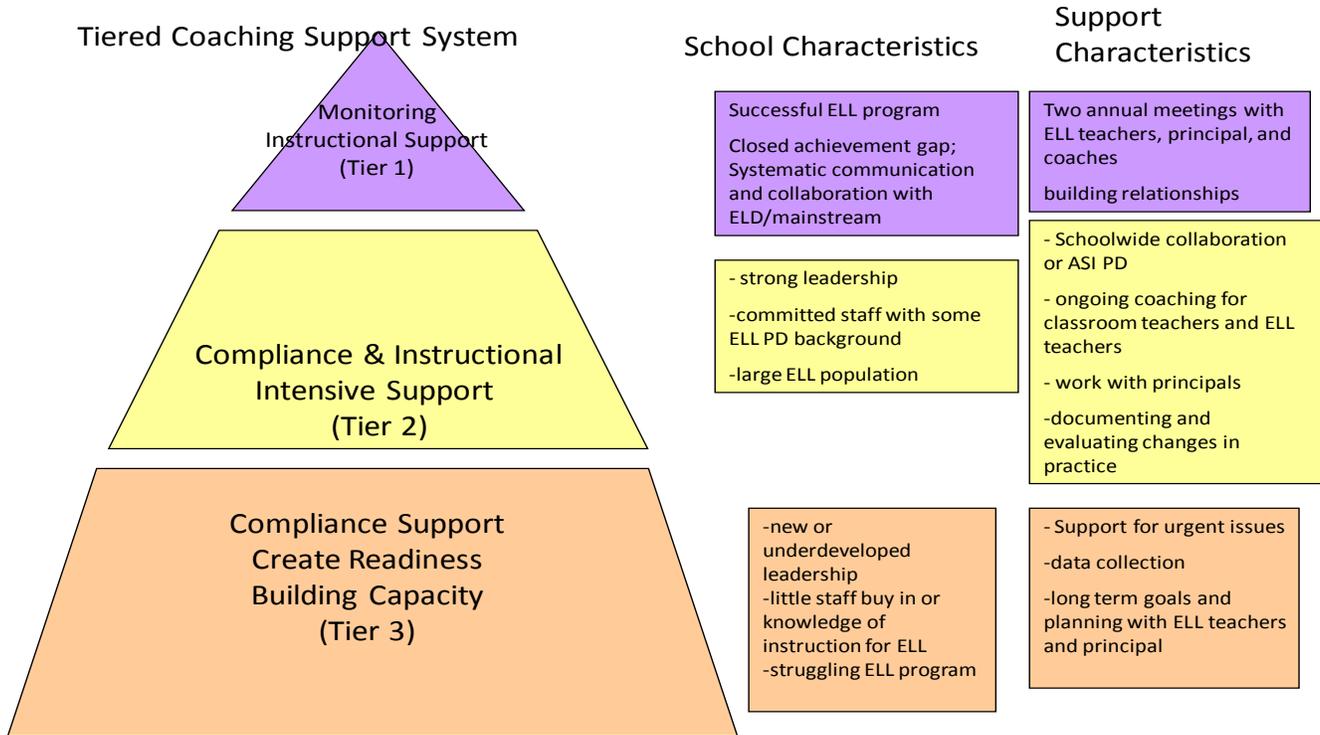
Raising the Achievement of English Learners in the Buffalo Public Schools

New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test—Four-Year General Education Cohort						
	2005 - 2006		2008 - 2009		Delta	
<i>Performance Level</i>	Student		Student		Student	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Proficient	N/A	N/A	94	19.1	94	19.1
Advanced	168	34.2	224	45.6	56	11.4
Intermediate	187	38.1	145	29.5	(42)	(8.6)
Beginning	136	27.7	28	5.7	(108)	(22.0)
Total Students	491	100.0	491	100.0		
Four-Year General Education Cohort Value-Add Percentage						
2005 - 2006 to 2008 - 2009						
	<i>from \ to</i>	Proficient	Advanced	Intermediate	Beginning	
	Advanced	12.0	17.1	4.7	0.4	
	Intermediate	6.3	20.0	11.0	0.8	
	Beginning	0.8	8.6	13.8	4.5	
Summary	Value Add	%No Change	%One Level	%Two Levels	%Three Levels	
%Regressed	5.9		5.5	0.4	N/A	
%No Change	32.6	32.6				
%Progressed	61.5		45.8	14.9	0.8	
			<i>net weighted impact metric</i>			
			positive	71.7		

Note: The cohort consists of general education students that scored Beginning, Intermediate, or Advanced in 2006 and Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced, or Proficient in 2009. They also had a score of Beginning, Intermediate, or Advanced in 2007 and 2008. If Not Specified or No Valid Score in 2006, 2007, 2008, or 2009, then not part of the cohort. If a student scored Proficient in 2006, 2007, or 2008, he/she is considered having tested out for 2009. The cohort size of 491 is significant.

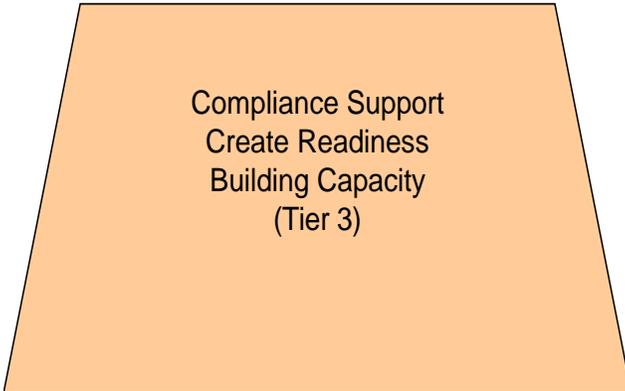
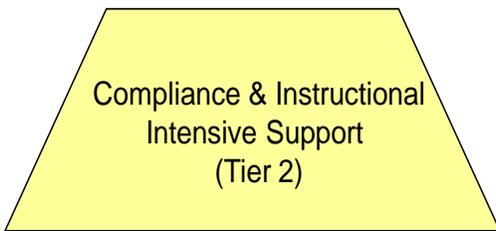
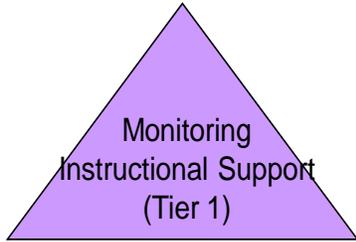
**APPENDIX D. SEATTLE'S TIERED COACHING
SUPPORT SYSTEM**

APPENDIX D. SEATTLE'S TIERED COACHING SUPPORT SYSTEM



Tiered Coaching Support System

Professional Development



For ELD Teachers Coaching Teacher leadership opportunities SCALE UP inquiry series	For Classroom/Content Teachers Teacher leadership opportunities SCALE UP inquiry series	For IA's Coaching focusing on collaboration & quality instruction
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For ELD Teachers Secondary: Proficiency Model: Focus on Collaboration: Curriculum- Inside / Edge Elementary: Aligned Sheltered Instruction + Collaborative Model	For Classroom/Content Teachers Secondary: Whole School SCALE UP training Elementary: Aligned Sheltered Instruction + Collaborative Model	For IA's SIOIP ELD Standards Proficiency Levels Microsoft Outlook WASL Prep ESIS / Source new IA Orientation ASPIRE training
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For ELD Teachers SCALE UP ELD Standards Introducing Proficiency Model: TBE Meetings WASL Prep / Collection of Evidence ELD Progress Report Training Roles and Responsibilities WLPT: Data analysis	For Classroom/Content Teachers SCALE UP Differentiation for ELLs Roles and Responsibilities WLPT: Data analysis	For IA's SCALE UP ELD Standards Proficiency Levels Microsoft Outlook WASL Prep ESIS / Source new IA Orientation ASPIRE training
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APPENDIX E. INDIVIDUALS INTERVIEWED

APPENDIX E. INDIVIDUALS INTERVIEWED

- Dr. Tamara O. Alsace, Director of Multilingual Education
- Dr. Mark Frazier, Lead Community Superintendent
- W. Charles Brandy, Director of Social Studies
- Anne Botticelli, Director of ELA
- Linda Smolen, Director of Reading
- Arlene Rosowski, Director of MST
- Dr. Folasade Oladele, Deputy Superintendent
- Fanni Lynn Zannolli, Director of Staff Development
- Betty Evans, Director of Early Childhood
- Phil Rumore, President of Buffalo Teacher's Federation
- Mary Ruth Kapsiak, Board of Education
- Ralph Hernández, Board of Education
- June Simmons-Barrow, Associate Superintendent for State and Federal Programs
- Amber Dixon, Executive Director
- Heriberto Galarza, Teacher on Special Assignment to the Office of Shared Accountability
- Will Keresztes, Associate Superintendent for School Support Services
- Rosemarie Colón-Cisneros, Supervisor of Bilingual Ed and ESL
- Anne Henry-Montante, Supervisor of Bilingual Ed and ESL
- Patrick Ferris, Coordinator (Title III)
- Joel Mercado, Language Assessment Specialist
- Ruth Casillas, Language Assessment Specialist
- Marianne Poprosky, ESL Support Teacher
- Wilda Ramos, Native Language Arts Support Teacher
- Ahmed Mohamed, SIFE Support Teacher
- Linda Scinta, Social Worker
- Rocío Cortés, Guidance Counselor
- Kelly Baudo, Supervisor of Science
- Robert Tyrrell, Science Support
- Dorothy McNicholas, ELA Staff Developer
- Rebecca Fast, Science Support Teacher
- Tanya Johnson, Science Support Teacher
- Tammy Martin, Science Support Teacher
- Robert Maulucci, ELA Staff Developer
- Bonnie V. M. Nelson, Supervisor - Howard Lewis Parent Center
- Kathleen McMahon, Coach
- Barbara Sullivan, Math Coach
- Nicole Reed, Reading Coach
- Robin Edmonds, Math Support Teacher
- Timothy Slaght, Math Support Teacher
- Claudette Rivera, Math Support Teacher
- Mary Margaret Dempsy, Math Support Teacher

- Sala Asan, Teacher Assistant
- Alham Muhsen, Teacher Assistant
- Nga Nguyen, Teacher Assistant
- Fran Wilson, Community Superintendent
- Catherine Battaglia, Community Superintendent
- Joe Melvin, Community Superintendent
- Coleen Webb, DPCC
- Barbara Robertson, DPCC

Principals

- Darlene M. Jesonowski
- Silvia Baines
- Donna Jackson
- Colleen L. Carota
- Nadia A. Nashir
- Marguerite Villa
- Wanda J. Schoenfeld

Teachers

- Karen Kane
- Janet Correa-Longo
- Dawn Coyle
- Susan Schultz
- Molly Eldridge
- Allison Barton
- Patricia Murphy
- Linda Pinzone
- Rosa Ziolkowski
- Petra Mencia
- Finune Shaibi
- Wanda Aviles
- Jose Acevedo
- Christine Dermatis
- Loretta Lynch
- Sally Siu Tay
- Rebecca Hendrickson
- Robert Jonhson
- Elsie Guash-Kosano
- Ahidee M. Lalor
- Emily Prokhorenko
- Ellen Gallagher
- Anna Pacifico

Parents

- Wendy Mistretta
- Asha Said
- Helen Paulini
- Muna Abdallah
- Nicolas Penchaszadeh
- Christine Feliciano
- Virginia Robinson Wagner
- Carla Suero
- Maria Kahn
- Coleen Webb
- Barbara Robertson

Community

- David Caban, President of Board of Directors, Hispanic United of Buffalo
- Edwin Martínez, President, Hispanic Alliance, and Vice President of Hispanic United of Buffalo
- Gary Welborn, Associate Professor of Sociology, Buffalo State College
- Katie McClain-Meeder, Director of Youth Programs, Hope Refugee Services
- Robin Smith, After School Program Coordinator, Hope Refugee Services
- Sherry Byrnes, Bantu Youth Council Mentor, Junior League of Buffalo
- Julie Waman, Bantu Youth Council Mentor, Junior League of Buffalo
- Felicidad Frenette, Director of Language Services, International Institute of Buffalo
- Denise Phillips Beehag, Director of Refugee and Employment Services, International Institute of Buffalo
- Ann H. Brittain, Catholic Charities of Buffalo
- Charles Massey, Coordinator, Office for Urban Connections, Houghton College
- Donna Pepero, Director, Refugee School Impact Program, Journey's End Refugee Service
- Denise Gonez-Santos, Director, Erie 1 BOCES, School Support Services
- Marian Deutschman, Buffalo State University

APPENDIX F. DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

APPENDIX F. DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

Notebook Materials

- List of Schools Serving English Language Learners by grade levels and numbers of ELLs
- Three-Year NYS Assessment Performance by NCLB Subgroup and Grade (2005-06 through 2007-08). Mathematics and English Language Arts
- ELA and Mathematics Assessment Results for 2007-08 by school and proficiency level, Grades 3-8
- Curriculum Guides for Grade 3 ELA, Math, and Science (Web page <http://buffaloschools.org/ScienceDept.cfm?subpage-19775>)
- Curriculum Guides for ELLs Grade 3 ELA, Math, and Science
- District Manual for ELLs:
 - Board Policy on English Language Learners, adopted 2006
 - Memorandum from Director of Multilingual Education to principals of schools with bilingual/ESL programs with program information for 2007-08 school year.
 - Memorandum from Superintendent James A. Williams to senior staff regarding Board Policy on Student Evaluation.
 - Memorandum from Director of Multilingual Education to ESL teachers regarding grading procedures for LEP students, Grade K-8.
 - Memorandum from Director of Multilingual Education to ESL teachers regarding NYSESLAT review materials and schedule.
 - Instructional Time Schedules for FESL and bilingual education
 - Human Resources Recruitment Bulletins with position descriptions and announcements for various positions in the Department of Multilingual Education.
- Expenditure Report for LEP Students Served in 2007-08
- Program Demographics—General Education, Special Education, ESL, Bilingual Education, Gifted and Talented (not included). School-by-school profiles of ELL students for 2007-08 school year.
- Sample of School Board Meeting Agendas—February 11, 2009; February 25, 2009; and March 11, 2009.
- PowerPoint Presentation of the Department of Multilingual Education Program Update for 2007-2008 presented to the Board on April 2, 2008
- Buffalo Public Schools Initiatives. Department of Multilingual Education
- Newcomer Program Proposal presented to the Buffalo Public School Student Achievement Committee on June 20, 2007
- Academic Intervention Services Procedures Manual

Other Materials

- Organization Chart 2008-09 for Division of Teaching and Learning; Division of Educational Services; Evaluation, Accountability and Project Initiatives; Office of School Performance; and Office of Family, School and Community Relations
- Office of School Performance organizational chart
- Enrollment 2007-08. Special Education by Education Type (General v. Special Ed)

- Department of Multilingual Education Program Overview 2007-08.
- School District Summary of LEP Students Served by Grade Level, Type of Program and NYSESLAT Participation. 2007-08 School Year. (Part 154 Comprehensive Plan, A-3)
- Number of Long-Term LEP Students (LEP Beyond Six Years) Identified Districtwide in 2007-08 (Part 154 Comprehensive Plan, A-3.1)
- Limited English Proficient Students with Disabilities by Disability Type NYSTART Download 3/6/2009
- Limited English Proficient Students by School and Education Type. NYSTART Download 3/6/2009
- New York State Testing and Accountability Reporting Tool. Interactive Assessment Reports. Buffalo Public Schools NYSESLAT Scores for 2007-08 and 2008-09. Provided by Department of Multilingual Education
- Children 3 to 21 years old served in federally supported programs for the disabled, by type of disability: Selected years, 1976-77 through 2006-07. U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (2009). Digest of Education Statistics, 2008 (NCES 2009-020), Chapter 2
- Mathematics State Assessment Results by Grade Level for grades 3-8. Historical Comparison from 2005-06 through 2008-09: District results in the aggregate, by individual subgroup (African American, Hispanic, LEP) and three schools
- English Language Arts State Assessment Results for all grades 3-8. Historical Comparison from 2005-06 through 2008-09: by individual subgroup (African American, Hispanic, and LEP)
- NYS District Report Cards 2005-06, 2006-07, and 2007-08
- NYS 2007-08 and 2008-09 School Accountability Status for Buffalo Public Schools
- NYS list of Schools Under Registration Review (SURR) 2007-2009.
- Three-Year Academic Achievement Plan
- Addendum
- Literacy Across the Curriculum
- Board Policy on ELLs adopted in 2006
- Professional Development—Description of Title III-funded professional development courses for SIFE students, SIOP, etc.
- Samples of professional development offerings related to ELLs: Accelerating Heritage Language Speakers in the LOTE Classroom, Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), Teacher Aide Academy, and 99 Ideas--teaching methods and strategies based on SIOP model.
- Classroom Observation Tool 2008-09
- Department of Multilingual Education Walk-Through "Look Fors"
- Quality Reviews of Various schools: Bilingual Center (33) and 08/09 School Improvement Plan, Frank A. Sedita Academy, and Grover Cleveland High School
- Part 154/ Services for Pupils with Limited English Proficiency
- 2007-2008 Part 154 Comprehensive Plan and Reporting Requirements for the Education of Limited English Proficient (LEP) Students. State Education Department. New York.
- Amendment of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education—Part 154, Apportionment and Services for Pupils with Limited English Proficiency

- NYS Education Department LAB-R Cut Scores for Districts outside of NYC only. Dated 09/08/05
- Buffalo Language Assessment Center. Parental Notification of LEP Identification. English and Spanish versions.
- Buffalo Public Schools Parental Notification of Instructional Services for LEP students.
- April 25, 2007 Memorandum from Deputy Superintendent (Oladele) regarding Cohort 2005 and Beyond District Policy for student to receive course credit
- Student/Parent Brochure for Current BPS Students grades 7-12. Extended Learning Opportunities (2007)
- C-4 Verification of Dropout Rate. July 2005-06; 2004-05
- After-school Intervention Program
- Buffalo Area Charter Schools. Retrieved from Buffalo Public Schools Web site 12/10/2009
- NYS Learning Standards for English Language Arts. Revised Edition. March 1996
- NYS Mathematics Core Curriculum MST Standards 3. Revised March 2005
- Mathematics Grade 3 Pacing Guides—includes New York State Standards and Performance indicators and samples of Pearson (Investigations) assessments.
- Elementary School Choice information and form (English and Spanish versions)
- 2008-09 Comprehensive High Schools of Choice Application
- Saturday Program
- Master Teacher Contract July 1, 1999
- English Language Arts NYS Core Curriculum
- NY State ESL Standards
- Buffalo ESL Curriculum Benchmarks. June 2007 Draft
- NY State Native Language Arts Standards, Grades 2 to 4
- Buffalo Spanish Native Language Arts Standards and Benchmarks, Grade 3
- Professional Learning Opportunity 2008/09
- Languages spoken at Waterfront School (one of the visited schools)
- Lafayette High School Master Schedule 2008-09
- School 33 Improvement Plan. 2008-09
- Plan for Long-Term LEP Students
- Brochure Información sobre el alfabetismo en el Siglo 21: Una Guía de la Comunidad sobre la Educación Multilingüe. (English and Spanish versions)
- *Moving into English* Harcourt/Student and Teacher Edition and Assessment Handbook.
- Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS)--3rd Grade--DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency
- DIBELS Third Grade Student Materials Benchmark Assessments.
- IDEC - Indicadores Dinoricos del Exito en la Lectura (IDEL) 3ro grado
- IDEL Benchmark Goals and Indicators of Risk. Three Assessment Periods per Year.
- IDEL Information--IDEL Fluidez en la Palabras sin Sentido, Fluidez en el Uso de las Palabras and Comprehension. <https://dibels.uoregon.edu/idelfino.php> Accessed 11/18/2009
- Harcourt *Trofeos* Pacing Plan - Grade 3 2008/09--
- Harcourt *Trophies/Trofeos* 150-Minute Schedule
- Skills Matrix *Trofeos* Grade 3
- *Trofeos* Language Skills Assessment

- *Trofeos* Teacher's Edition
- *Moving into English* Student Workbook
- *Language!* Webpage review of results with one school in Minnesota.
<https://dibels.uoregon.edu/idelinfo.php>. Accessed 11/18/2009
- Great Source. ACCESS Newcomers Web page
<http://www.greatsource.com/store/ProductCatalog>. Retrieved 12/30/2009
- *Acuity* (by CTB/McGraw-Hill) Periodic Assessments--New York City Department of Education
- NYS Division of Budget. 2008-09 School Aid Budgets. Buffalo School District.
<http://www.budget.state.ny.us/localities/schoolaid/schoolaid.html> accessed 1/17/2010
- Buffalo State-State University of New York. Initiatives of Office of College and Community Partnerships; Asarese Matters Youth Center; Connections—2008 Annual Report of the Office of College and Community Partnerships at Buffalo State College. Brochures for Academic Talent Search Program, Upward Bound, Liberty Partnerships Program (dropout prevention), and Science Technology Enrichment Program.
- Buffalo State College. Pre-Collegiate Program participation by target schools in 2008-09.
- Questions and Responses for Refugee Leaders/Law Enforcement Meeting. June 28, 2008. Buffalo State College
- The Refugee Tutoring Project--program and newsletter (January 2009, Vol. 1, Issue 2)
- Refugees: Buffalo's New Generation. Working Rough-Cut DVD 4/3/09
- African Educational Alliance of West New York. Event Program, Saturday January 12, 2008 "African Immigrant and Refugee Student's Education: The Role of School/Community Partnerships in Academic Achievement"
- Journey's End Refugee School Impact Program 2007-08 Annual Report
- NYS Diploma Requirements Based on June 2005 Board of Regents Action to Phase in the 65 Graduation Standards on required Regents Exams
- NYS Diploma Requirements for Students Entering Grade 9 in 2000-04 Based on Regents Action to Extend 55 Low-Pass Option on Regents Exams
- New York State Education Department Policy to Appeal to Graduate with a Lower Score on Regents Examination Submission Information. 2005-06
- NYS—Memo to the Full Board on Proposed Amendment of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education Relating to Supplementary Certificates and Supplementary Bilingual Education Extensions for Certificates in the Classroom Teaching Service and Pupil Personnel Services
- Promises and cautions regarding using response to intervention with English language learners. Haager, Diane. *Learning Disability Quarterly*. June 22, 2007
- New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance. Bureau of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance <http://www.otda.state.ny.us/main/bria/contact.htm> accessed 3/2/2010
- New York State Archives. Legacies Project.
http://www.archives.nysed.gov/projects/legacies/leg_buf.shtml Accessed January 2, 2010.
- Buffalo Architecture and History. <http://www.buffaloah.com/h/hisp/hisp.html>. Accessed January 2, 2010
- New York State Bureau of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance.
<http://www.otda.state.ny.us/main/bria/> Accessed January 15, 2009

- Robert E. Slavin (Johns Hopkins University) and Cheugn Alan (Success for All Foundation) (2003). *Effective Reading Programs for English Langue Learners: A Best-evidence Synthesis*. Washington, D.C.: Center for Research on the Education of Students At Risk (CRESPAR), December 2003.

APPENDIX G. SCHOOLS VISITED

APPENDIX G. SCHOOLS VISITED

- McKinley High School
- D'Youville Porter School #3
- Dr. Antonia Pantoja School #18
- International School #45 @ 4
- International School #45 @ 40
- Bilingual Center School #33
- Herman Badillo School #76 @77
- Frank Sedita School #30
- Lafayette High School
- Olmstead School #64
- Waterfront School #95

APPENDIX H. STRATEGIC SUPPORT TEAM MEMBERS

APPENDIX H. STRATEGIC SUPPORT TEAM MEMBERS

Jennifer Alexander

Jennifer Alexander is former high school ESL and French teacher, with over 20 years of experience in the field of second language education. She has been an ESL coordinator, emergency immigrant education program supervisor, and Title VII program coordinator. Currently, she works for Houston Independent School District as a central office administrator in the multilingual department. In this position, she oversees the development and implementation of programs, data, and compliance for over 60,000 ELL students in the district's 300 schools. She has co-authored several grants to support the educational success of ELL students and has presented at several state and national conferences and before the Texas State Board of Education. She earned her undergraduate degree from Western Oregon University and received her M.Ed. in second language education from the University of Houston. She is an advocate for the education of students with diverse linguistic needs.

Michael Casserly

Michael Casserly is the executive director of the Council of the Great City Schools, a coalition of 65 of the nation's largest urban public school districts—including Buffalo's. Dr. Casserly has been with the organization for 33 years, 18 of them as Executive Director. Before heading the group, he was the organization's chief lobbyist on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., and served as the Council's director of research. Dr. Casserly has led major reforms in federal education laws, has garnered significant aid for urban schools across the country, has spurred major gains in urban school achievement and management, and has advocated for urban school leadership in the standards movement. He led the organization in holding the nation's first summit of urban school superintendents and big-city mayors. He has a Ph.D. from the University of Maryland and a B.A. from Villanova University.

Christine Garbe

Christine Garbe is the Title IIIA, English Language Learners Program (ELLP) supervisor for the Anchorage School District. The Anchorage School District has over 49,000 students, some 5,200 of whom are English language learners. Students in the ELLP represent 95 different languages. Over the past 14 years, she has also served as a classroom teacher, ELL teacher, and grant facilitator. She was instrumental in writing the first Plan of Service for Elko County School District and starting a new ELLP at one of the elementary schools. She earned her B.A. at Chico State University in Chico, California and is currently working on her master's degree in education administration. Christine Garbe serves on several committees dealing with instructional improvement for all students and their families. She has presented at several conferences including Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), Bilingual Multicultural Education Equity Conference (BMEEC), and American Educational Research Association (AERA), all on topics related to English language learners.

Anh Tran

Anh Tran is the pre-K-12 ELL program manager of the English Language Learner Department of St. Paul Public Schools. St. Paul Public Schools currently serves close to 40,000 students, including more than 17,000 ELL students. The three largest language groups are Hmong, Spanish, and Somali. She works closely with Teachers on Special Assignment to support schools through instructional program design, management, and monitoring, as well as by developing and delivering professional development aligned with district and department initiatives. She represents the ELL department on a number of district committees to ensure high-quality instructional programs for students and families. A native of Viet Nam and a graduate of St. Paul Public Schools, she received a B.A. in history and a K-12 ESL license from the University of Minnesota. She has taught English as a Second Language (ESL) in St. Paul Public Schools.

Joanne Urrutia

Joanne H. Urrutia is the administrative director for the Division of Bilingual Education and World Languages, Miami-Dade County Public Schools. She is a native of Puerto Rico, where she completed her undergraduate work at the University of Puerto Rico. In 1972 she began her teaching career in New York City, teaching in a college preparatory program for City University of New York. In 1975, she moved to Miami, where she progressed from high school teacher to her present position. She has a master's degree from Florida International University and a doctorate from NOVA Southeastern University. Dr. Urrutia has many years of experience and expertise in the implementation of bilingual programs, including those that address the needs of limited English proficient (LEP) students and their families, and programs that provide native speakers of English the opportunity to study world languages. She began her involvement with bilingual education in 1989 as project manager of a software development project for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). Under her leadership, the infusion of technology into the ESOL instruction has become an integral part of Miami-Dade's program. Presently, Dr. Urrutia has overall districtwide responsibility for all instructional programs for LEP students, dual-language programs, and foreign language instruction.

Gabriela Uro

Gabriela Uro is the manager for English language learner policy and research at the Council of the Great City Schools and was the Council's manager for intergovernmental relations. As part of the legislative team, she works on legislative matters relevant to ELLs, both with Congress and the Administration. She also works with the Council's Research and the Strategic Support Teams on projects pertaining to ELL issues. Prior to joining the Council, Ms. Uro served as the policy advisor to the Assistant Secretary of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Director of the Office of Bilingual Education (now English Acquisition) in the U.S. Department of Education. She brought 13 years of education policy and budget experience to the U.S. Department of Education and was part of the Department's team for the 1994 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Reauthorization and the subsequent implementation teams for Title VII, Title I, and the Regional Assistance Centers. Ms. Uro received holds an M.P.A. with a specialization in education policy from Columbia University and a B.A. *magna cum laude*, (Phi Beta Kappa) from the University of California, Irvine.

Terry Walters

Teresa Walter is the director of the Office of Language Acquisition for San Diego Unified School District, overseeing the district program for more than 32,000 English learners. She previously worked as a principal, vice principal, English learner support resource teacher, and teacher in San Diego. She has also developed curriculum and consults on the topic of English learners and English language development. She has written two books on the subject: *Amazing English: How-To-Handbook* and *Teaching English Language Learners: A How-To-Handbook*, both published by Pearson/Longman. Her goal is to bring greater clarity and practical insight to the complex issue of educating English language learners. Ms. Walters received her M.A. in multicultural education, and her credentials as bilingual cross-cultural specialist and language development specialist from San Diego State University. She received her B.A. *cum laude* from Point Loma College.

Adriane Williams

Adriane Williams is an assistant professor of education leadership studies at West Virginia University. She was formerly the research manager of the Council of the Great City Schools having worked on the development and initial launching of English language learner study in which the Council is currently engaged. Dr. Williams received her B.A. in economics and French from Wellesley College and her M.Ed. in secondary education, with endorsements in French and English as a second language, from the George Washington University. She earned her Ph.D. in educational policy studies from at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

APPENDIX I. ABOUT THE COUNCIL

APPENDIX H. ABOUT THE COUNCIL

Council of the Great City Schools

The Council of the Great City Schools is a coalition of 65 of the nation's largest urban public school systems. Its Board of Directors is composed of the Superintendent of Schools and one School Board member from each member city. An Executive Committee of 24 individuals, equally divided in number between Superintendents and School Board members, provides regular oversight of the 501(c) (3) organization. The mission of the Council is to advocate for urban public education and assist its members in the improvement of leadership and instruction. The Council provides services to its members in the areas of legislation, research, communications, curriculum and instruction, and management. The group convenes two major conferences each year; conducts studies on urban school conditions and trends; and operates ongoing networks of senior school district managers with responsibilities in areas such as federal programs, operations, finance, personnel, communications, research, and technology. The Council was founded in 1956 and incorporated in 1961, and has its headquarters in Washington, D.C.

Strategic Support Teams Conducted by the Council of the Great City Schools

City	Area	Year
Albuquerque		
	Facilities and Roofing	2003
	Human Resources	2003
	Information Technology	2003
	Special Education	2005
	Legal Services	2005
	Safety and Security	2007
Anchorage		
	Finance	2004
Birmingham		
	Organizational Structure	2007
	Operations	2008
Broward County (FL)		
	Information Technology	2000
Buffalo		
	Superintendent Support	2000
	Organizational Structure	2000
	Curriculum and Instruction	2000
	Personnel	2000
	Facilities and Operations	2000
	Communications	2000
	Finance	2000
	Finance II	2003
Caddo Parish (LA)		
	Facilities	2004
Charleston		
	Special Education	2005
Charlotte-Mecklenburg		
	Human Resources	2007
Cincinnati		
	Curriculum and Instruction	2004
Christina (DE)		
	Curriculum and Instruction	2007
Cleveland		
	Student Assignments	1999, 2000
	Transportation	2000
	Safety and Security	2000
	Facilities Financing	2000
	Facilities Operations	2000
	Transportation	2004

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	Curriculum and Instruction	2005
	Safety and Security	2007
	Safety and Security	2008
Columbus		
	Superintendent Support	2001
	Human Resources	2001
	Facilities Financing	2002
	Finance and Treasury	2003
	Budget	2003
	Curriculum and Instruction	2005
	Information Technology	2007
	Food Services	2007
Dallas		
	Procurement	2007
Dayton		
	Superintendent Support	2001
	Curriculum and Instruction	2001
	Finance	2001
	Communications	2002
	Curriculum and Instruction	2005
	Budget	2005
Denver		
	Superintendent Support	2001
	Personnel	2001
	Curriculum and Instruction	2005
	Bilingual Education	2006
Des Moines		
	Budget and Finance	2003
Detroit		
	Curriculum and Instruction	2002
	Assessment	2002
	Communications	2002
	Curriculum and Assessment	2003
	Communications	2003
	Textbook Procurement	2004
	Food Services	2007
	Curriculum and Instruction	2008
	Facilities	2008
	Finance and Budget	2008
	Information Technology	2008
Greensboro		
	Bilingual Education	2002
	Information Technology	2003

Raising the Achievement of English Learners in the Buffalo Public Schools

	Special Education	2003
	Facilities	2004
	Human Resources	2007
Hillsborough County (FLA)		
	Transportation	2005
	Procurement	2005
Indianapolis		
	Transportation	2007
Jackson (MS)		
	Bond Referendum	2006
Jacksonville		
	Organization and Management	2002
	Operations	2002
	Human Resources	2002
	Finance	2002
	Information Technology	2002
	Finance	2006
Kansas City		
	Human Resources	2005
	Information Technology	2005
	Finance	2005
	Operations	2005
	Purchasing	2006
	Curriculum and Instruction	2006
	Program Implementation	2007
Los Angeles		
	Budget and Finance	2002
	Organizational Structure	2005
	Finance	2005
	Information Technology	2005
	Human Resources	2005
	Business Services	2005
Louisville		
	Management Information	2005
Memphis		
	Information Technology	2007
Miami-Dade County		
	Construction Management	2003
Milwaukee		
	Research and Testing	1999
	Safety and Security	2000
	School Board Support	1999
	Curriculum and Instruction	2006

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	Alternative Education	2007
Minneapolis		
	Curriculum and Instruction	2004
	Finance	2004
	Federal Programs	2004
Newark		
	Curriculum and Instruction	2007
New Orleans		
	Personnel	2001
	Transportation	2002
	Information Technology	2003
	Hurricane Damage Assessment	2005
	Curriculum and Instruction	2006
New York City		
	Special Education	2008
Norfolk		
	Testing and Assessment	2003
Philadelphia		
	Curriculum and Instruction	2003
	Federal Programs	2003
	Food Service	2003
	Facilities	2003
	Transportation	2003
	Human Resources	2004
Pittsburgh		
	Curriculum and Instruction	2005
	Technology	2006
	Finance	2006
Providence		
	Business Operations	2001
	MIS and Technology	2001
	Personnel	2001
	Human Resources	2007
Richmond		
	Transportation	2003
	Curriculum and Instruction	2003
	Federal Programs	2003
	Special Education	2003
Rochester		
	Finance and Technology	2003
	Transportation	2004
	Food Services	2004
San Diego		

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	Finance	2006
	Food Service	2006
	Transportation	2007
	Procurement	2007
San Francisco		
	Technology	2001
St. Louis		
	Special Education	2003
	Curriculum and Instruction	2004
	Federal Programs	2004
	Textbook Procurement	2004
	Human Resources	2005
Seattle		
	Human Resources	2008
	Budget and Finance	2008
	Information Technology	2008
	Bilingual Education	2008
	Transportation	2008
Toledo		
	Curriculum and Instruction	2005
Washington, D.C.		
	Finance and Procurement	1998
	Personnel	1998
	Communications	1998
	Transportation	1998
	Facilities Management	1998
	Special Education	1998
	Legal and General Counsel	1998
	MIS and Technology	1998
	Curriculum and Instruction	2003
	Budget and Finance	2005
	Transportation	2005
	Curriculum and Instruction	2007